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28 March 1910.







125

# SAINTLY WORKERS

*Five Lenten Lectures*

DELIVERED IN ST. ANDREW'S, HOLBORN,  
MARCH AND APRIL, 1878

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**SAINTLY WORKERS.**

125

# SAINTLY WORKERS

## Five Lenten Lectures

DELIVERED IN ST. ANDREW'S, HOLBORN,  
MARCH AND APRIL, 1878

BY

FREDERIC W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.,

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London and New York  
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Mar 29 1910  
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Boston.  
(1637)

## DEDICATORY LETTER.

MY DEAR CANON WESTCOTT,—

Ten years ago, when I had the happiness of being your colleague at Harrow, you preached in the School Chapel a sermon which exercised a very powerful influence not only on my imagination, but also, I hope, by God's blessing, on my views of life. At the request of some who heard it, you printed—although you did not consent to publish—that sermon. But even after the lapse of ten years I should not require the printed page to recall the outline of the thoughts about "Disciplined Life" which you then wished to impress upon your youthful audience.

---

To that sermon is mainly due the present little volume. If by the blessing of Him without whose blessing all efforts are vain, any good results have followed from the delivery of these Lectures, or should follow from their publication, you will perhaps be reminded of the ancient promise, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

This is the reason why I could not do otherwise than ask you to let me allow myself the pleasure of connecting your name with a volume in no way worthy of such an honour, except from the fact that it breathes sincere convictions on the subjects with which it deals, and that those convictions are, at any rate in their main outlines, in sympathy with your own.

It would be presumption on my part to speak of the debt of gratitude which, in common with the whole Church, I owe to your writings; but let me here thankfully record the yet deeper personal debt which I owe to your influence

and example during the years when we worked together. You then sowed the germ from which this little book has sprung, and you, at least, will receive with kindness any portion, however trivial, of ripened grain. If the ears be thin, and if there be scarlet poppies amid the corn, others will set it down, not to the sowing, but to the inherent poverty of the soil on which the good seed fell;—

“ *Grandia saepe quibus mandavimus hordea sulcis  
Infelix lolium et steriles nascuntur avenae.*”

I am,

My dear Westcott,

Very sincerely yours,

F. W. FARRAR.



“ The old order changeth, giving place to the new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”

TENNYSON, *Morte d'Arthur*.

“ As princes, after certain periods, change the emblems on their coins, choosing sometimes the lion, at others stars or angels, for the die, and endeavouring to give a higher value to the gold by the striking character of the impression, so God has made piety assume these novel and varied forms of life, like so many new characters, to awaken the admiration not only of the disciples of the faith, but also of the unbelieving world.”—THEODORET. *Hist. Rel.* 25 (ap. NEANDER, *Ch. Hist.* iii. 345).



## P R E F A C E.

THIS little book is of the humblest and most unpretending character.

Since my own church was closed for restoration I was able to accept an invitation from my kind friend the Rev. H. J. S. Blunt, Rector of St. Andrew's, Holborn, to deliver some of the Thursday Evening Lent Lectures in that church.<sup>1</sup> The audience consisted largely of men, and especially of young men from some of the neighbouring city firms. As it was

<sup>1</sup> I cannot let this book appear without offering to the Rector of St. Andrew's my warm thanks for the advice and sympathy which enable me to look back with so much happiness to those five evenings spent in his Church and Rectory.

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understood that entire latitude was permitted in the choice of the subject, and as Canon Barry had delivered a course the year before on Ecclesiastical History, I gladly seized the opportunity of saying a few simple words upon the lessons which we may learn from past ideals of holiness. The Lectures excited some interest, and friends on whose judgment I could rely were so decidedly of opinion that their publication would be useful to those who heard them, and to many more who did not, that after a little natural reluctance I decided to place them in the hands of Messrs. Macmillan. They will, I hope, be the last sermons which I shall publish for some time to come.

It ought to be needless for me to say that these Lectures were not suggested by any sympathy for the peculiar features of mediæval religion. I desired to call attention to the lives of men preeminent for goodness; but

yet I have repeatedly warned my readers to beware of their intellectual errors, and to see that the attempt to reproduce the mere external aspects of their lives would be at once impossible and pernicious.

I must beg all readers to regard the following pages as nothing more than Lenten Sermons, written and delivered from week to week—lectures which aim solely at Christian edification, and which are in no wise intended for historical disquisitions. That Christian biography should sometimes be introduced on such occasions into the pulpit is surely desirable, and others may be able to handle it more ably and successfully than has been possible to me.

I have indicated in the footnotes the books to which I referred in writing the Lectures, and I here mention a few of those which are most easily procurable, for the sake of any who may

desire to read further on the subjects on which I have touched. Neander's and Gieseler's *Ecclesiastical Histories*, Montalembert's *Monks of the West*, Dean Milman's *History of Christianity* and *Latin Christianity*, Archbishop Trench's *Mediæval Church History* and Renan's *Études Religieuses*, were useful for all the Lectures, and especially for the first. For the second little more was needed than Canon Kingsley's admirable volume on the Hermits, in which he translates large parts of the lives of St. Antony by St. Athanasius, and of the Hermit Saint Paul by St. Jerome. For the third I consulted, among other books, the charming pictures of monastic life in Dean Church's *St. Anselm* and Mr. Morison's *St. Bernard*, Froude's *Short Studies*, Mrs. Jameson's *Art Legends of the Monastic Orders*, Mr. Kenelm Digby's *Mores Catholici*, and *Broad Stone of Honour*, and the Lives of Lacordaire by Foisset, Montalembert

Miss Greenwell and Father Chocarne. For the fourth I read the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth cantos of Dante's *Paradiso*. Mrs. Oliphant's *St. Francis of Assissi*, and Ozanam's *Études Germaniques* and *Les Poëtes Franciscains*. For the fifth Sir J. Stephen's *Lectures on Ecclesiastical Biography*, Maclear's *Apostles of Mediæval Europe*, Miss Yonge's *Pioneers and Founders*, and the biographies of Dr. Livingstone, Bishop Mackenzie, and Bishop Coleridge Patteson.

I have here touched on subjects respecting which all Christians are, I trust, agreed; and I pray that God's blessing may attend words written with the sole desire to promote simplicity of life and sincerity of heart. If from the perusal of the following pages any reader should be led to see how deep a moral and spiritual benefit he may derive from studying in a right and humble spirit the lives

of the “heroes of unselfishness” in every age of Christianity, my object will have been well fulfilled. It will have been still more amply and blessedly fulfilled if any youthful reader become better prepared to face the trials and temptations of future years by learning that

“Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
These three alone lead life to sovereign power;”

and that these can only be attained by following God’s blessed saints, in all virtuous and godly living, along that way of the cross which was pointed out to us by the “King of Saints”—Jesus Christ our Lord.

ST. MARGARET’S RECTORY, WESTMINSTER.  
*Easter, 1878.*

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b



## SAINTLY WORKERS.

“Sanctis qui sunt in terrâ ejus ; mirificavit omnes voluntates  
meas in eis.”—PSALM xvi. 3.



## SERMON I.

### THE MARTYRS.

εΓΓΥC ΜΑΧΑΙΡΑC ΕΓΓΥC ΘΕΟΥ.

IGNATIUS, *ad Smyrn* 4.



## THE MARTYRS.

Οἱ θεῖοι μάρτυρες — οἱ νῦν τοῦ Χριστοῦ πάρεδροι καὶ τῆς  
βασιλείας αὐτοῦ κοινωνοί.—DIONYS. ALEX. *ap. Euseb.* vi. 42.

“ Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity,  
it profiteth me nothing.”—*1 COR. xiii. 3.*

“ And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are  
these that are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?  
And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me,  
These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have  
washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the  
Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve  
Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the  
throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more,  
neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor  
any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne  
shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of  
waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”—  
*REV. vii. 13-17.*



## SERMON I.<sup>1</sup>

### *THE MARTYRS.*

MATT. x. 39.

*He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.*

I HAVE been asked on these Lenten evenings to bring before you some of the past ideals of holy work and noble testimony in the history of the Christian Church, and I wish, with God's blessing, to do so in a very plain and simple manner;—and this evening we shall speak about martyrs.

I. You all know, my brethren, that the three days which immediately follow Christmas Day are dedicated to the memories of martyrs. It might at first glance seem strange, but it is a fact of which we soon catch the meaning, that after the brightness, the joy, the festivities

<sup>1</sup> Preached at St. Andrew's, Holborn, Thursday, March 14.

of so glad a commemoration, we should pass at once, and without pause, to thoughts of agony and persecution. The 26th, 27th, and 28th of December are commemorations of martyrdom; first, the day of St. Stephen, martyr both in will and deed; then of St. John the Evangelist, of whom legend says that he was saved from a caldron of burning oil at the Latin Gate, and who was thus a martyr in will, though not in deed; then of the Holy Innocents, "flowers of the martyrs whom on the very threshold of the light Christ's persecutor swept away as the whirlwind sweeps away the budding rose"<sup>1</sup>—martyrs "not by speaking, but by dying"—martyrs in deed, but not in will. But the fact ceases to be strange when we recall Christ's own words: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on the earth? I came not to send peace, but a sword;" and those

<sup>1</sup> "Salvete, flores martyrum,  
Quos lucis ipso in limine  
Christi insecutor sustulit  
Ceu turbo nascentes rosas."

PRUDENT. *De S. S. Innocent.*

other words attributed to Him by early Christian writers : “ He who is near me, is near the fire ; ” “ Near God, near the sword.”<sup>1</sup> Christ had lived and died ; but how should men hear of Him without a preacher, and how should they preach except they were sent ? “ Ye are witnesses of these things,”—“ Ye shall be witnesses unto Me,”—He said to His disciples ; and the word martyr originally meant witness, and nothing more.<sup>2</sup> It was only afterwards that it came to mean a witness to Christ by death. But the essence of all martyrdom is witness to the truth of God ; and though the wild beast bounds no longer upon its victim in the crowded amphitheatre, and the flames feed not on human limbs at the kindled stake, we shall see, I trust, that there are martyrdoms of life no less than of death, and in modern as well as in ancient times.

<sup>1</sup> Luke xii. 51 ; Matt. x. 34 ; Orig. *Hom. in Jerem.* iii. 778 ; Ignat. *Ad Smyrn.* 4 (Wescott, *Introd. to Gospels*, p. 430).

<sup>2</sup> Luke xxiv. 48 ; Acts i. 8. In Acts xxii. 20 ; Heb. xii. 1, we can see the gradual transition of the word to its secondary meaning.

2. The quality which St. Stephen displayed in eminence was courage, and courage is essentially the martyr's virtue. But it was not by his death only that this courage was manifested. The mere physical courage which faces death without a shudder is not rare; it is found in thousands of the most ordinary men. Take a common ploughboy from the hillside and train him as a soldier, and so strong are the influences upon him of the discipline of his life, the presence of his comrades, the eye of his officer, that he will advance unflinching upon the batteries that vomit their cross-fire upon him, though he well knows that not his will be the glory of victory, and that where he falls there will he lie, unknown and unnoticed, on the crimson sod.<sup>1</sup> Far loftier is the courage which knows no other training than the instincts of

<sup>1</sup> "But tak' him from his native hill,  
Say, 'Such is royal George's will,  
And there's the foe ;'  
His only thought will be to kill  
Twa at ae blow." BURNS.

There is a similar passage in one of Kossuth's speeches.

a manly heart ; and above all the courage which holds out in utter loneliness. Almost any man will confront peril with a multitude ; scarcely one in a thousand will stand alone against a multitude when they are bent on wrong. Thousands, again, will risk all for a hoary prejudice : only the true martyr souls have the battle-brunt which will abide to the death by a new or a forgotten truth. And this was the courage of St. Stephen. Though only a Hellenist among Hebrews—only a deacon among Apostles—he had seen deeper into Christianity than any of his brethren. He saw, with perfect clearness, two great principles which dawned but slowly and dimly upon their minds. One was that the Law of Moses as a system was doomed to pass away—fading even as the glory faded from his once-illuminated face : the other was that Christianity was to be a free revelation not to Jews only, but to all the world ;—that henceforth all mankind was to be a brotherhood, with equal privileges, in the great family of God ;—that in Christ Jesus there was to be neither Greek

nor Jew, neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ all and in all. And since it had been given him to see these truths, and their infinite importance, he was ready even to die for them. It did not damp his ardour to stand utterly alone amid the raging controversies of hostile synagogues. His was no mere flaring enthusiasm which sniouldered at the breath of danger. He did not even quail when he found himself face to face with the stern menace of the Jewish Sanhedrim. They bent on him their fierce frowns; they glared on him with angry eyes; but still his face was as the face of an angel, and his upward gaze saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And so he delivered his glowing testimony, uttered his bold rebuke; and, not flinching when they seized him to drag him to his doom—even when he lay in anguish under the heaped stones, he struggled to his knees,<sup>1</sup> and praying

<sup>1</sup> *Acts vii. 60, θεὶς δὲ τὰ γόνατα.* There is a great beauty (as Bishop Wordsworth points out) in the sonorous epitrite, *ἐκοιμήθη*, with which St. Luke ends the narrative.

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for his murderers, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,” he fell asleep.

3. So died Christ’s earliest martyr; nor was it long before others followed him. James the son of Zebedee was slain with the sword. James, the Lord’s brother, was hurled down from the Temple summit.<sup>1</sup> One by one the Apostles passed to their unrecorded dooms. Thirty years after the death of Christ, Rome was burnt down, and being falsely accused of the crime, the Christians were tied to the stake in the gardens of Nero’s Golden House, and while he drove about among the multitude in the guise of a charioteer, the flames were lit, and the ghastly darkness illuminated by living torches, of which each was a martyr in his shirt of flame.<sup>2</sup> St. Peter, it is said, died in the amphitheatre: St. Paul was, perhaps, beheaded on the Appian Way. Slowly, through

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> A.D. 64. “Ut flammandi, atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis, urerentur.” Tac. *Ann.* xv. 44; cf. Mart. x. 25; Juv. i. 155; viii. 235; Sen. *Ep.* 14; Tert. *Adv. Nat.* l. 18; *Ad Mart.* 5, &c.

the cities of Asia; a prisoner chained in turns to ten rough and cruel soldiers, whom he compared to ten leopards, the aged Ignatius journeyed on to be thrown to the wild beasts before the assembled multitudes of Rome.<sup>1</sup> To St. Polycarp at Ephesus, as the flames arched over him, the Spirit of God was as a moist whistling wind amid the fire.<sup>2</sup> *Christians ad leones*, "The Christians to the lions," became a common cry of the Pagan mob. Old men like Pothinus, young maidens like Blandina, mere boys like St. Pancrasius, cheerfully, nay, triumphantly, bore torture rather than deny their Lord. St. Perpetua was young, and delicate, and a mother. "Have mercy on thy babe," they said to her: "Have pity on the white hairs of thy father and the infancy of thy child." "I will not." "Art thou then a Christian?" they said, and she answered, "'Yes; and "since my father would have led

<sup>1</sup> Ignat. *Ad Rom.* 5.

<sup>2</sup> Song of the Three Children, v. s. 27. For the incident see *Martyr. Polyc.* and Milman, *History of Christianity*, ii. 184 *segg.*

me away, Hilarianus ordered him to be driven off. . . . Then sentence was pronounced, and we were condemned to the wild beasts; and with hearts full of joy returned to our prison.”<sup>1</sup> “*Condemned to the wild beasts, and with hearts full of joy returned to our prison!*” Is it not strange? as though the mention of joy were to a Christian the most natural thing in the world in connection with an imprisonment of terrible cruelty and a death of nameless horror. “Whence,” it has well been asked, “came this tremendous spirit, caring, nay, offending the fastidious criticism of our delicate days?” What was it that inspired St. Ignatius to say, “Now I begin to be a disciple. Whether it is fire, or the cross, or the assault of wild beasts, or the wrenching of my bones, the crunching of my limbs, the crushing of my whole body, let the tortures of the devil all assail me, if I do but gain Christ Jesus.”

<sup>1</sup> *Acta SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (see Tert. *De Animâ*, 55). “*Magis damnati quam absolti gaudemus.*”—Tert. *Ad Scap.* 1; Milman, *History of Christianity*, ii. 216. —

<sup>2</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*. p. 472.

Why does Tertullian so boldly write, “Call us Sarmenticii and Semaxii, names derived from the fagots wherewith we are burned and the stakes to which we are tied,—these are our robe of victory, our triumphal chariot!”<sup>1</sup> You must not think that the martyrs had any spell which secured them an immunity from pain. “They shrank from suffering like other men, but such natural shrinking was incommeasurable with apostasy.” No intensity of torture could affect a mental conviction, and so adequate a support and consolation to them in death was the sovereign thought in which they lived; so perfect the holy beauty of the maiden as she knelt to await the tiger’s leap; so peaceful the sleep of the young boy, beside his wooden cross, as the morn dawning grey on the grim circle where he was to meet his end; so radiant was the old man’s countenance as he lifted heavenward his trembling hands out of the flame—that often and often would the bystanders have taken their places, and far more

<sup>1</sup> Tert. *Apolog.* 50.

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gladly have shared their martyrdom than have sat in guilty glory beside the tyrants who sentenced them to death.<sup>1</sup>

4. And thus, taking Christ at His word, in spite of every agony which they were called on to endure, they found His promise true. In losing their lives they found them; by giving up all, they received back more than all. There is no proof of this more remarkable than the absence of all gloomy or distressing subjects in the catacombs of Rome. "For a long time peopled with martyrs, ornamented in times of persecution and under the dominion of melancholy thoughts and painful duties, nevertheless," says a modern writer, "they represent in the historic parts only heroic traits, and in the decorative parts only what is pleasing and graceful"—the Good Shepherd, the Vintage, fruits and flowers, lambs and doves,—nothing but what excites emotions of innocence and joy. In death, even in execution,

<sup>1</sup> Such incidents frequently occur in the narratives of the martyrs.

early Christians saw only a path to celestial happiness ; and far from associating a dreadful end with horror, they delighted to enliven it with smiling colours, and adorn it with palms and vine-leaves. . . . “In the Christian catacombs there is no sign of mourning, no token of resentment, no expression of vengeance ; all breathes softness, benevolence, charity.”<sup>1</sup> To the Christian martyrs to live was Christ, and therefore to die was gain.

5. But if this was their personal gain, their individual bliss, you will ask, What good end for us and for the world did the martyrs accomplish by their supreme self-sacrifice ? I will try to tell you. I stood once in a little church in Rome, dedicated to St. Stephen, and opened once a year only on his day. It is a circular church, and on its frescoed walls, all round, are painted the grim scenes of centuries of martyrdom. Here, visibly pictured before you, you see how they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted,

<sup>1</sup> M. d'Agincourt, ap. Milman, *History of Christianity*, iii. 514.

were slain with the sword, wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, in dens and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented: and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who thus speaks of them, tells us also—and is not the existence of such a church in such a place a pre-eminent witness that so it was?—how, through faith, these martyrs subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. One answer indeed to the question “What good they did?” and an answer of infinite importance to themselves, would be, as we have seen, that they gained Christ; that they possessed their own souls in patience; that they were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. But I do not think that this would have been the thought most immediately prominent in the hearts of the greatest of the martyrs. If St. Paul could say that he could

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have wished himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren after the flesh, I do not think that his greatest followers looked merely on the world as a great sea of fire, in which, amid the universal shipwreck, they had nothing to do but to seize for safety their individual plank. No! I think that they knew well that there is “nothing fruitful but sacrifice ;” that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church ; that by their death and by their constancy, they were securing the victory of the cause they loved. And so it was. “The angels of martyrdom and victory,” says Mazzini, “are brothers : both extend their protecting wings over the cradle of future life.”<sup>1</sup> It was the martyrs who mainly won the victory of Christianity, and when “Rome at last found that she had to deal with a host of Scaevas, the proudest of earthly sovereignties, arrayed in the completest of material resources, humbled herself before a power which was founded on a mere sense of the unseen.”<sup>2</sup> Nor did it shake them that they

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, vi. 746.    <sup>2</sup> Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, i. 472.

were to die not having seen the victory, as Moses died before his feet had touched the Holy Land. They walked by faith, and not by sight; and trusting in God, they knew that in due time the victory would come.

And when Christianity had triumphed indeed, but grown corrupt, there was still room for martyrs. It was to keep pure the faith of Christ that Savonarola, the great reformer of Florence, faced agony and shame. It was this that nerved John Huss, the great reformer of Bohemia, wearing his cap painted all over with devils, to walk so calmly to the stake. It was this which sustained Martin Luther in his life of stormy conflict against cardinals and kings. It was this that enabled Latimer and Ridley to play the men amid the flames, and to light a candle in England which, thank God, is not yet put out. A mere holiday opinion will never inspire the enthusiasm of conviction; but mankind will ever yield due honour to a cause for which men are ready to suffer and to die.

6. This then was one good thing which the martyrs did for all the world,—they changed the cross of Christ from an emblem of horror and infamy to the proudest of all symbols, to be woven in gold on the banners of armies and set in gems on the crowns of kings.) And another grand thing they did was to set the loftiest of all examples; to bear witness to the most necessary of all truths, a truth to which in these lectures we shall have again and again to recur, and the only truth which can purify a corrupt society or ennable a selfish world,—that there is, in life, something better than ease and comfort, more delightful than pleasure, “more golden than gold,” that the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment; and that man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth. Such men, as has well been said, “create an epidemic of nobleness.”<sup>1</sup> Men become better and greater from gazing at their example; more ready to do and dare; more willing to

<sup>1</sup> Froude, *Short Studies*, ii. 15.

lift their eyes out of the mire of selfishness and the dust of anxiety and toil; more brave to try whether they too cannot “scale the toppling crags of duty,” and hold converse with these their loftier brethren upon the

“ Shining tablelands  
To which our God himself is moon and sun.”

Through the darknesses and disappointments of life, amid the wars and miseries of history, these high examples glide ever before us like a pillar of fire. And this their power of example by death becomes a power of influence in life. It is with good men as with evil. Evil, as we all know to our cost, attracts by its sympathies, and those who have once been overcome by it, add, alas! even unconsciously to its power of attraction. Just as every spark, however small, has its effect, and glows, and gleams, and involves a danger or a possibility of conflagration, even so a spark of evil in the heart of a fellow-man betrays itself to us through the mere power of

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its existence, and can, even without words, make itself intelligible. Well, so is it also, thank God, with good. "The heroic self-sacrifice of one single man may not only rally a whole wavering host, but may even flash like lightning through the centuries, and kindle in a whole nation a flame of holy enthusiasm."<sup>1</sup> You have heard the story of the battle of Sempach. The Swiss were fighting the Austrians, and strove in vain to break at any single point the serried, impenetrable phalanx of Austrian spears. Then one man, Arnold of Winkelried, unknown till then, shouted to his comrades to take care of his wife and children, and that he would break the ranks; and so, rushing forwards, clasped a whole armful of spears into his brawny arms, and dragged them down with him, and fell dead as he received their points into his heart,—but broke the line. Over his dead body his comrades charged to victory. It is even thus that many a martyr has burst a path of

<sup>1</sup> Lange *Life of Jesus* ii. 39, E. Tr.

triumph for others into the serried ranks of wrong. It was thus that the obscure monk Telemachus, determining to denounce in the face of guilty myriads the detestable butcheries of the amphitheatre, leapt into the arena before them all, and faced the angry, yelling mob of 20,000 spectators and forbade the gladiators to fight, and was struck down and stabbed, and trampled on, and braved the death; but by that witness and that martyrdom, put an end for ever to those disgusting and cruel shows.<sup>1</sup> It was thus, to take modern instances, that in the face of furious insulting slave-owners, who heaped upon him every form of abuse and calumny, William Wilberforce fought out in the House of Commons the battle of the slave, and, by a life of struggle, put an end for ever to the infamous traffic in human flesh. It was thus that, in self-sacrifice and toil, spending his whole fortune in the cause of the prisoner and captive, John Howard visited

<sup>1</sup> *Theodoret*, v. 26. In the martyrologies of Bede, &c., he is called St. Almachus.

the prisons of Europe, and restored them to humanity, and wiped from the sword of justice its most polluting stain. It is thus that even now, in the teeth of angry clamour and sneering prejudice, good men are fighting God's great battle of temperance against that degrading vice of drunkenness which disgraces, defiles, and if the plague be not stayed, will one day ruin our land. In such causes, under such conditions, by such sacrifices, "men become magnetic." They flash in upon guilty nations and slumbering consciences the light of truth.

Even in the most corrupt ages there are always more than we suppose, who, in their hearts, rebel against the prevailing fashions; and of these one takes courage from another, one supports another. Thus there rally round these Elijahs the 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal; communities are formed with higher principles of action and purer intellectual beliefs; and, as their numbers multiply, "they catch fire with a common idea and a common indignation, and ultimately burst out

into open war with the lies and iniquities of men.”<sup>1</sup>

7. I could add much more on this subject, but I must not weary you. { What I have tried to make you see is that there *is* some good to the world in the results of martyrdom, in the example of martyrdom ; that the martyrs have been, in fact, the salt of the earth. Have been —nay, they are ! For martyrdom is not one, but manifold ; it is often a battlefield where no clash of earthly combatants is heard ; it is often a theatre no wider than a single nameless home. Sometimes it is passive endurance ; sometimes it is active opposition ; sometimes it is the decided warfare against a tyranny : sometimes it is the stout declaration of a truth :—but it is always a firm belief in the eternal distinctions between right and wrong ; an evidence of conviction that there are worse evils in life than pain, and poverty, and persecutions ; and higher blessings than pleasure, and success, and wealth ; worse evils by far than those which the world

<sup>1</sup> See Froude, *Short Studies*, ii. 15.

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dreads, and higher blessings by far than those for which it toils. To have the spirit of a martyr—and he who has it will be, in the highest sense, a martyr—is to be true at all costs to the best and highest things you know. He who willingly, and with no thought of reward, risks his life to save others; he who cheerfully braves loss rather than do what he deems dishonourable; he who faces persecution rather than abandon what he feels to be right,—he has the martyr's heart. The Russian serf who, to save the life of his master's children, leapt out from the sledge among the wolves, into the snow—he was a martyr. The American pilot of Lake Erie, who to bring his burning steamer safe to the jetty's side, clung on to the tiller till he fell a blackened corpse,—he was a martyr. During the last Chinese war, a private of the Buffs with some Hindoos fell into the hands of the Chinese, and was ordered to perform the kotow; the Sikhs obeyed, but the soldier, saying that he would not prostrate himself before any Chinaman alive, was killed.

“Poor, reckless, rude, lowborn, untaught,  
Bewildered and alone,  
A heart, with English instincts fraught,  
He yet could call his own.  
Ay ! tear his body limb from limb,  
Bring cord, or axe, or flame,  
He only knows that not through him  
Shall England come to shame.  
Yes ! honour calls, with strength like steel,  
He puts home visions by,  
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel,  
An English lad could die ;  
And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,  
With knee to man unbent,  
Unfaltering on its dreadful brink,  
To his red grave he went.”<sup>1</sup>

He, too, was a martyr. And every man has some gleam of the martyr-spirit, who encounters any serious peril to save others. Six years ago, on the coast of Scotland, seven young boys rowed out to sea to fish. The boat was too small, and the boys having suddenly gone to one side, she was upset, and all the seven were plunged into the sea, not far from land. One little fellow alone could swim, a boy not yet thirteen years old—let his name be recorded—

<sup>1</sup> Sir F. H. Doyle.

Alexander Sutherland. One after another that boy saved five of his companions. In trying to save the sixth he became himself exhausted and sank to rise no more. The five whom he had rescued were restored to their weeping parents, but the brave little swimmer who had saved his fellows, sank and was drowned, and they laid him in his grave upon the shore. And he, too, was, in his way, a martyr.

“He dares, and sinks, and dies alone  
With all the saved in view,  
A Christ among the fisher-lads,  
The ransom of his crew ;  
Oh ! great young heart, all goodness fence  
Thy grave by yon rough sea !  
Who says the race is dwindling down,  
That owns a lad like thee?”<sup>1</sup>

Let us learn, then, my friends, practically this one lesson. If the hour of martyrdom, of witness, comes to you, will you be ready for it? It may come in very humble, in very unexpected

<sup>1</sup> These verses, by the Rev. W. Griffiths, are quoted by the Hon. and Rev. W. H. Lyttelton in his *Aids to Christian Education*.

ways. The late chaplain-general of the forces tells us that once a young soldier came to him, and said, that when in his first night in the barracks he knelt down to say his prayers, the others all laughed at him, and flung their boots at him. The chaplain advised him to say his prayers in bed. Next time he met the young soldier, he asked him how the plan had succeeded? "I did it for a night or two," said the soldier, "but then I thought that it looked like being ashamed of Jesus Christ, and I knelt down again to say my prayers by my bed, but none of the others laugh at me now. On the contrary, they kneel down themselves and say their own prayers." Was not the chaplain wrong? was not the soldier right? was not he, too, in his way, a martyr? Will not you, too, try, each in such ways as God may require your witness, to be a martyr? If not in proclaiming good, will you not at least try to be God's witnesses in resisting evil? Will you not feel, will you not say, I too will try, like Stephen, to bear my witness

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to Christ? Tradesman or merchant, tempted by false weights, or gambling speculations, or adulterated goods, will you not go home, and at any cost bear your witness that "It is better to die than to lie!" You, who, to your own great loss, are tempted by any usage of society to adopt a low, or a base, or a worldly standard, will you not bear witness that at all costs it is better to obey God than to do that which cannot bring God's blessing with it? Young man, who art assailed by evil passions or evil temptations, when those passions are running riot in your heart, or when your companions are trying to make you walk in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of the scornful, will not you bear your testimony that it is better to bear ridicule than to be a blasphemer; better to face craving than to be a drunkard; better to suffer anything than to pollute or injure a soul for which Christ died? O the applications are a thousandfold! Only be true to your God; be true to your Saviour; be true to yourselves; be true to the highest that you know, and you, too,

each in your turn, each in your measure, shall have the high honour of helping forward by your example the cause of God, the cause of good—you, too, shall be Christ's witnesses—you too, shall join the glorious army, and even if you be never called upon to taste the martyr's agony, yet, without resisting unto blood, through the mercy and merit of your Lord and Saviour your hands shall wave the martyr's palm-branch and your brows shall bear the martyr's crown.



**SERMON II.**  
**THE HERMITS.**



## THE HERMITS.

“Solitude is the mother-country of the strong ; silence is their prayer.”—RAVIGNAN.

“Solitude, the audience-chamber of God.”—W. S. LANDOR.

“Μόνον πρὸς μόνον Θεὸν γενέσθαι.”—PLOTIN.

“ And Wisdom's self  
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude ;  
Where, with her best nurse, contemplation,  
She plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,  
That in the various bustle of revolt  
Were all-to ruffled, and sometimes impaired.”

MILTON, *Comus*.

“Non beatum faciunt hominem secreta silvarum, cacumina montium, si secum non habet solitudinem mentis, sabbatum cordis, tranquillitatem conscientiae, ascensiones in corde, sine quibus omnem solitudinem comitantur mentis acedia, curiositas, vana gloria, periculosa temptationis procellae.”—VVO DE CHARTRES, *Ep. 192* (MONTALEMBERT, i. 22).

“Κατέλιπον μὲν τὰς ἐν ἄστει διατριβὰς ὡς μυρίων κακῶν ἀφορμὰς,  
ἐμαυτὸν δὲ οὐπω ἀπολιπεῖν ἡδυνήθην.”—BASIL, *Ep. 2*.



## SERMON II.

### *THE HERMITS.<sup>1</sup>*

JER. IX. 2.

*“Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! For they be all adulterers; an assembly of treacherous men.”*

THIS cry, wrung from the sad and timid prophet by the desperate iniquities of a decadent people, has in all ages found its counterpart. Four hundred years earlier, amid the voices of the enemy, and the oppression of the wicked, it had been the cry of David, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would haste to escape from the stormy wind and tempest.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Preached at St. Andrew's, Holborn, Lent, 1878, March 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. lv. 6.

More than twenty centuries later, amid the confusions and depravities of the eighteenth century it was the cry of our own despairing and tender-hearted poet,—

“Oh ! for a lodge in some vast wilderness,  
Some boundless contiguity of shade,  
Where rumour of oppression and deceit,  
Of unsuccessful and successful war,  
Should never reach me more ! My ear is pained,  
My soul is sick, with every day’s report  
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.  
There is no flesh in man’s obdurate heart ;  
It does not feel for man. The natural bond  
Of brotherhood is severed, as the flax  
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.”<sup>1</sup>

There must be some chord of sympathy in human hearts which vibrates in unison with such sentiments as these, or we should not find them echoed by high and beautiful natures, separated from each other by centuries of human suffering and human wrong. And perhaps this very gathering is a sign that men do sometimes yearn for solitude and rest, for here, and on a week-day evening, in the heart of

<sup>1</sup> Cowper, *The Task*, Book II.

London, with the rush and roar of its traffic in our ears, many men, and even many young men, have assembled to listen to such lessons as may be gleaned from the life of the Desert Fathers. What can be more separated by leagues and æons of outward circumstances and inward sentiment, than is the life of the hermits from our own? What more unlike their loneliness than the dashing waves of this sea of men? What more removed from their calm than the feverish throbbing of the world's great beating heart? What more unlike their poetry, and peace, and contemplation, than "this stern reality of things, this colossal uniformity, this machine-like movement, this sour-visagedness of joy itself?"<sup>1</sup> What more unlike their utter indifference to temporal interests, and earthly cares, than all that we see or hear of around us: these dim careworn faces; this dismal toil; this incessant anxiety; these reckless speculations; this mad greed for gold; this sacrifice, for the supposed gains of life, of all that

<sup>1</sup> Heine.

makes life worth living ; this puff and push ; this quackery and imposture ; this gilded luxury of the wealthy ; this ghastly poverty of the poor ; these severe conditions of struggle ; these hardly veiled immoralities of pleasure ; all the nominal Christianity, and all the practical heathenism of this vast, teeming, suffering, toiling mass of humanity—this London in the nineteenth century after the death of Christ ? What have we, who have our part in such life as this, what have we in common with the “sainted eremites” ? was not their life—with its errors, no less than with its noblenesses—the dream of a byegone age ; an ideal which we condemn as mistaken ; a torch which has long since smouldered out ?—Well, lest you should deem the subject wholly unpractical—when it is my humble desire that each of these lectures should have a direct bearing on our common lives,—let me only at first remind you that one of the noblest characters in the Old Testament as well as one of the noblest in the New, was nothing more or less than a hermit ;

in the Old, Elijah, the “lord of hair,”<sup>1</sup> the rough, wild, half-Arab prophet who shattered the monstrous idols of Jezebel; in the New, John the Baptist, over whom the lips of his Saviour pronounced the unequalled eulogy,—“But what went ye out in the wilderness for to see? A prophet? yea, and I say unto you, and much more than a prophet! . . . Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.” It was in special privileges, not in moral grandeur,—in blessings vouchsafed, not in holiness of character—that, “ notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

2. But we are to speak to-day of those who, under the Christian dispensation, have revived that old ideal, not only in the spirit, but in the letter. And I will first say a few words of the most active founder, and the best type of these—the hermit, St. Antony.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings i. 8, וְאֵשׁ גָּדֹל יְהֹוָה.

<sup>2</sup> In the following sketch of the facts of St. Antony’s life I have made free use of Canon Kingsley’s *Hermits*, in which

St. Antony was born of noble and wealthy parents, in Egypt, about the year 251. Even as a boy he was simple and serious ; and he and his sister, being left orphans at an early age, kept house together. The next incident in his life finds its parallel in other lives of the saints. One day in church he was struck by the words of Jesus, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all thou hast, and give to the poor; and come follow me and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Not considering whether that was a special command or no, he took Christ at His word, sold his estate and property, and gave all to the poor, except a small amount which he retained for his sister. Once more, in church, the words "Take no thought of the morrow," smote his conscience. He gave up the rest of what he had, took his sister to a nunnery, and retired to the outskirts of a little village. There beloved by all, he worked with his hands, prayed continually, and learnt the Scriptures

delightful little volume large parts of his life are translated from St. Athanasius.

by heart.<sup>5</sup> Like Marcus Aurelius, he also strove to imitate from each good man whom he met his special virtue;—from one his self-denial, from another his courtesy, from another his charity, from another his meekness.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes, as was natural, he wavered; sometimes, for he was still young, he turned to cast a longing, lingering glance at the life which he had left; sometimes, which was to him the most painful thing of all, he was assailed by the sensual impulses of youth. But by faith, and prayer, and fasting, and by dwelling in constant meditation on the greatness of the soul, and on the ennoblement of man by Christ, and on the terrors of future retribution, God helping him, he escaped. And, having thus gained the victory, one night—for to these hermits in their emaciation and mysticism visions were naturally numerous—he saw the evil spirit cowering at his feet like a black child, who said to him, “I have deceived many, I have cast down many; but as in the case of many, so in thine, I have been worsted in the battle.”

“Who art thou?” asked Antony; and it replied in a pitiable voice, “I am the Spirit of Impurity.” “Thou art utterly despicable,” said Antony; “thou art black of soul and weak as a child; nor shall I henceforth cast one thought on thee, for the Lord is my helper, and I shall despise my enemies”; whereat the black being fled, vanquished and afraid.<sup>1</sup>

But Antony knew far better than to suppose that by one moment’s revival, or conversion, or acceptance of a formula he could make his life an easy triumph or endless song. Utterly alien from these old fathers was the promise of perfect assurance held out by some modern teachers to one single paroxysm of overpowering excitement. He knew that the evil spirit would return again; and therefore, like St. Paul, he bruised his body with blows, and led it about as a slave,<sup>2</sup> lest, having conquered in one case, he should be tripped up in others. He ate but once a day, and then bread and water. He

<sup>1</sup> *Kingsley*, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 27. ὑπαπιδέω μου τὸ σῶμα καὶ δουλαγονγῶ.

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slept but little, and mostly on the bare ground. At last he went and made his home alone in the village tombs. There he suffered at once needlessly and terribly. Nature, in accordance with her own inevitable laws, revenged herself on a life which, however nobly meant, was so unnatural in its conditions. Haunted amid the pangs of hunger and the deliriums of fever by the painted imagery of those immemorial sepulchres,<sup>1</sup> in every physical pang, in every disordered thought, he seemed to see the hideous faces and feel the unsparing blows of visible demons. But God dealt mercifully with a life which was utterly sincere, and amid visions which would have tempted him by gold or silver, or hideous noises, or unhallowed thoughts, he heard holy encouragements, and thrilled with inward consolations. Supported by all that he believed, undaunted by all that he had endured, at the age of thirty-five he retired to a mountain-cave for twenty years to perfect in prayer

<sup>1</sup> This is Kingsley's very ingenious and probable suggestion.—*Hermits*, p. 42.

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and solitude the purity of his soul. Before the close of that period many inquirers had visited him, many who wished to be his disciples gathered around him; and at the end of it, still hale and happy, he came forth, and after strengthening martyrs and confessors in a time of persecution, retired once more into the farthest desert, and under a high mountain, among a few neglected palms, and by a spring of water sweet and cold in the midst of wild beasts that did not harm him, he tilled himself a little garden, and there dwelt in meditation and peace. Casting out devils, advising all who came to him, training brethren who were to be his followers, uttering many a wise counsel, and, in the belief of his contemporaries, working many a miracle, he lived till extreme old age, retaining his grace of countenance and his humility of soul, his cheek still ruddy, his eye undimmed, his natural force unabated. At last he saw that "it was time for him to set sail, for he was a hundred and five years old"; and so bequeathing to Athanasius his sheepskin cloak and

saying, "I perceive that I am called by the Lord," he gently, and sweetly, and humbly died.

3. Now was this a life which you and I can venture to judge or to ridicule? Was this life, in the cave and the desert, an absurd life, an erroneous life, a superstitious life, a life utterly ignorant of what is the will of God towards man? Or was it, with all its imperfect knowledge, a noble and a worthy life, and a life from the contemplation of which we all may profit, and a life which had learnt, and learnt worthily, some of the greatest truths and principles which were taught us by Christ our Lord? My brethren, small indeed is the chance that any one of us will be tempted to act in the most distant degree as did St. Antony, or to imitate the hundredth part of his self-denials. Much of his conception of religion, we may say with confidence, was mingled with error. He made Elijah his model, but of Elijah as of St. John we may say, as Christ has taught us, that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is

greater than he—greater in revealed knowledge, richer in spiritual blessings. Antony, it may be, failed to realise that man is not born to live alone, that God has made him for society, and not for unbroken solitude; that, all his life long, man's duty is wider than a care for the salvation of his individual soul; that, even in matters of religion, selfishness must be excluded; that love to our neighbour is ever mingled with—and is the appointed way of manifesting—our love to God. We are but half-men, the very best of us. Antony's view of truth was imperfect; his ideal of life one-sided. He was hampered by that dangerous literalism in the interpretation of Scripture which has been so immense a source of confusion and error; he was probably trammelled by the dark and prevalent dogma as to the all-but-impossible forgiveness of post-baptismal sins; he had not recognised in all their illimitable fulness the truths that mercy is better than sacrifice, and that God is love. And yet, when we have made all these admissions, it

may remain true that, because he was entirely faithful to the light he had, therefore his life may have been as incomparably superior to any shallow, vulgar, self-indulgent Christianity that would condemn him as the peak of Chimborazo is superior to the dull, salt ooze of the flat seashore. *S*In the light of this truth—the fact that God will judge us by our sincerity, not by our wisdom—there vanishes much of the perplexing mystery in the silences of God ; much of our wonder that He does not interfere with—does not miraculously interpose to illuminate—whole æons of honest ignorance and convinced error. If there be enough of kindly light to lead us on each step of life, what matters the thickness of the encircling gloom ? We may know not anything ; it may turn out at last that many of our own thoughts of God were as poor and as imperfect as have been those of many of His saints ; but if we have been faithful to the best we know, then we are full sure that He who died to redeem us will judge us by the light we had, not by

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the light we had not ; that the Face like our own face will smile on us with pardon and welcome, and the hand of Him who died for us will fling open to us the gates of everlasting life.

4. For whatever may have been his theoretic errors or his intellectual limitations, St. Antony too, taking Christ at His word, found His promise true, and had, like the martyrs, even in this life, his thousandfold reward. If he lived in the wilderness God prepared him a table in the wilderness, and brightened the barren rocks with heavenly manna, and made the desert blossom as the rose.

1. For note first that, with all its privations, all its struggles, all its terrors—in spite of the loneliness in the mountain-cavern and the demon-visions in the painted tomb—the life of Antony was a happy life.

a. It was happy in its *solitude*. It would not be happy to us ; it would not be happy, and hardly even possible, to any man whose soul was not deeply absorbed in things eternal and unseen. It is only the best men who know how

to live, if need be, alone. There is, indeed, a time in the life of almost every man, "when the weight of existence presses on fevered nerves or weary heart, and they long for some refuge, even on this side of death." But for merely wearied natures, for the surfeit of luxury and the satiety of ambition, solitude would be no refuge. The disappointed worldling, the worn-out voluptuary does not change his nature by changing the scene of his life. "What exile from his country succeeds also in escaping from himself?" asks the wise Epicurean poet. A change of surroundings involves no change of inward disposition. The aim of the true hermits was not to escape from temptation, but to train themselves to *conquer* temptation. It was not to find a retreat for the feeble, but a training-place for the strong. The motive of the dweller in the Thebaid was not misanthropy or cynicism.

"They who from wilful disesteem of life  
Affront the eye of solitude, shall find  
That her mild nature can be terrible."

But so far from such a disesteem of life, it was an intense conviction of its awfulness and value in the sight of God, which was the mainspring of action to an Antony or an Hilarion. That depth of soul, that self-recollection, that stability of holiest purpose, which are almost impossible in the incessant noise, and bustle, and hurry of modern life, made hours, and even years, of solitude a blessed boon to those whose spiritual life found sufficient nurture in meditation upon God, —in thinking of “the days of old and the years of ancient times.”<sup>1</sup> The happiness of their solitude sprang from an intense conviction, and deepened it. To Antony the unseen world was as the seen. “Trouble not at the loss of thy bodily eyes,” he said to a blind friend; “thou hast the eyes with which the angels see, with

<sup>1</sup> “The bearing which thoughts and studies may have upon our acts is not enough considered. . . . Not pathetic only, but profound also, and of the most solid substance, was that reply made by the old Carthusian monk to the trifler who asked him how he had managed to get through his life. ‘*Cogitavi dies antiquos et annos aeternos in mente habui.*’” (Ps. lxxviii. 5.)—Matthew Arnold, *The Great Prophecy*, p. xxxvi.

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which thou mayest behold God." "For him," it has been said, "the spiritual world was one intense reality. Everywhere he felt himself face to face with the eternal. What are to us figures were to him sensible truths ; and he was strong because he felt the awful grandeur of the conflict in which we, no less than he, are engaged."<sup>1</sup> "One night," we are told, "he was thinking of the destiny of the soul, and a voice came from without, 'Antony, arise ! come forth, and see.' And when he lifted up his eyes he beheld a vast and hideous shape, reaching to the clouds, and other beings, winged, which strove to rise. And, as they rose, the monster stretched forth his hands to catch them, and if he could not, then they soared aloft, untroubled for the future. And Antony knew that he looked upon the passage of souls to heaven." *Such* were the convictions which filled his solitude with realities, and gave him power to be a teacher of mankind.

*B.* And, as his life was happy in its solitude,

<sup>1</sup> Westcott.

because he walked by faith and not by sight, so it was happy in *its simple healthy conditions*. In the manual labour, the useful tillage, the reduction of life to its simplest elements combined with a heart which was at perfect peace with God, there was an element of health which accounts for the gaiety and charm in the look and manner of the first of the hermits, and which made Antony's life as true a life to every purpose which he understood, as any life which we gain from all our comfort, and luxury, and incessant activity and change. To him the busy vanities, and reckless competitions, and gnawing jealousies, and fretting cares of these great cities would have been transcendently more unnatural, would have had infinitely less charm, than the long nights passed in such insatiate prayer, that at the dawn he said, "O sun, why dost thou rise already, and turn me from contemplating the splendour of the True Light;"<sup>1</sup>—than the long days, when, looking across the blue waters of the Gulf of Akaba,

<sup>1</sup> Montalembert, *Monks of the West*.

he saw far away the granite peaks of Sinai flaming in the hot noon, as though they were still bursting with the splendour of the descending Lord. We who in these cities rarely see a sunrise, or notice a sunset—we who see so little of “the unfolding of the flower, or the falling of the dew, or the sleep of the green fields in the sunshine,” can hardly imagine what the glory of nature was to those poor hermits, as day by day the gorgeous pageant of the sunlight passed over their heads, and night after night “the stars leapt out, and hung like balls of white fire in that purple southern sky.”<sup>1</sup> The glories of nature gave to their purified spirits a high and constant communion with Nature’s God.<sup>2</sup>

γ. And if the life was happy in its solitude and happy in its natural simplicity, it was happy too—when once the passions of the rebellious

<sup>1</sup> Kingsley, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> “A philosopher asked Antony, ‘How art thou content, father, since thou hast not the comfort of books?’ Quoth Antony, ‘My book is the nature of created things. In it when I choose I can read the words of God.’”—Kingsley, p. 101.

flesh were subdued—in *its exemption from many of the assaults of sin* “I have been assailed by three usurers,” said the hermit Serapion, “avarice, sensuality, hunger. Of the first two I am rid, having neither money nor passions.” And how characteristic and how beautiful is such a simple anecdote as this! “Let us have just one quarrel, like other men,” said one old hermit, who had lived for years in the same cell with another without a disagreement. Quoth the other, “I do not know what a quarrel is like.” Quoth the first, “Here, we will put this brick between us, and each say it is ours, and have a squabble over it.” They put the brick between them. “It is mine,” said one. “I hope it is mine,” said the other. “If it is yours, take it,” said the first;<sup>1</sup> and so these two poor old men could not do what we find it so inconceivably easy to do—get up a quarrel between them. Or take this anecdote:—

A brother once brought to St. Macarius a beautiful cluster of fresh ripe grapes. He

<sup>1</sup> Kingsley, p. 142, from *Words of the Elders*.

looked at them wistfully, but seeing another brother at work, determined to give them to him. He too would have liked the sweet, purple, refreshing grapes, but preferred to give them to another. And he gave them to another, and so, each preferring another's enjoyment to his own, they passed through the hands of the little community, and were brought back untouched to St. Macarius. And he (for how could he eat them when all his brethren had so generously given them up?) threw them far away. Was not this at least unselfishness? Had not these men learnt something? Is there nothing noble in complete superiority to petty indulgences? (Does not "the high desire that others may be blessed" savour of heaven?) Had they not this high happiness that their whole desires were subordinate to the will of God?<sup>1</sup> Is the life we see around us,—its greed,

<sup>1</sup> "A great theologian once discovered that a poor beggar at the door of a church was a man of profound learning. The beggar said that he was perfectly happy; that he had never had an enemy; that he had never been unfortunate; and added, 'Hoc

its self-absorption, its indifference to others, its jealousies, backbitings, eavesdroppings,—is it so very beautiful, so very Christian?—is it so very much an ideal to be in love with, that we can afford entirely to look down on the strange lives of the hermits in the wilderness?

5. I cannot think so. Let us not sever ourselves by any sharp discontinuity from any class of God's children in the days of old. Each age has its own types of saintliness, its own ideals of the best way of serving God. No good deed, no genuine sacrifice, is ever wasted. If there be good in it, God will use it for His own holy purposes; and whatever of ignorance, or weakness, or mistake was mingled with it, will drop away as the withered sepals drop away when the full flower has blown. Nor was the life of the hermits mere individualism. It was philanthropic also. It was very far from useless; it was useful to their own days; useful to the days that were to follow; useful for all time.

unum volo quod vult Deus, ita omnia fiunt ut volo.' "—K. Digby,  
*Mores Catholici*, i.

i. It was useful to their own days. Different remedies are required amid differing conditions. What might in these times be absurd or pernicious may have been a necessary resource in other ages. The hermits, let us remember, arose during a period of terrible confusion, amid the chaos of a society for which it might well have seemed that the fountains of the great deep were being broken up. There lay the decaying carcase of the institutions of the world of classic paganism; and on every side was heard the flap of the wings of the gathering vultures. If St. Paul in his day had, because of the present necessity, recommended, to some at least, celibacy rather than marriage,<sup>1</sup> the hermits might well have deemed that their own age was too desperate for the ordinary moral remedies. Art and science were dead; society had sunk into utter frivolity; slavery had assumed its most revolting aspects; cruelty and luxury were triumphant. They might well have thought that the only protest which could be effectual,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 1, 8, 26.

the only protest which would startle into attention a dead and wicked world, would be one which should at least unmistakably proclaim the awful dignity, the inestimable value of the individual soul. Merely to *preach* purity, and unworldliness, and charity seemed hopeless; and therefore they proclaimed the glory and the necessity of these virtues in the language of such examples as no human beings could misunderstand. As the days of Ahab needed an Elijah, as the days of Herod needed a John Baptist, so the age of the successors of Constantine needed, and were leavened by an Antony, an Hilarion, a Macarius, and a Paul.

ii. Nor did their example die with them. To them we owe, both indirectly and directly, the preservation, in its purity, of the Christian faith. When Athanasius was in danger of death, it was among the hermits of the desert that he found safe refuge from his enemies. It was Athanasius who wrote the biography of Antony. It was to Athanasius that Antony bequeathed his sheepskin cloak; and of all the honours of his

life, Athanasius accounted none greater than this—that he had been permitted to commune with the desert saint. And St. Basil, too, and St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the eloquent maintainers of the faith, had both been hermits. When the Emperor Valens sent a great officer to try to win over St. Basil to the Arian heresy, the saint stood firm. “I never met such boldness,” said the courtier. “Because you never met a bishop,” said Basil. “This bishop is above threats,” reported the officer to the emperor, and the orthodoxy of the diocese was saved.<sup>1</sup> Again, it was the life of Antony that tended to the conversion of St. Augustine, as you have already heard. It was St. Jerome, a hermit like Antony, who translated the Bible into Latin. It was Telemachus, a hermit like Antony, who leapt down into the amphitheatre at Rome, and, by his protest and martyrdom, put an end for ever to its hideous butcheries. It was Ephrem the Syrian, a hermit like Antony, who, with his dying breath,

<sup>1</sup> Kingsley, p. 164.

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raised a needful protest against slavery, when he made the daughter of the Governor of Edessa swear never again to be carried in a litter by slaves, because "The neck of man," he said, "should bear no yoke but that of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

iii. And lastly, for all time, the hermits have proved by actual life, that perfect purity and perfect self-denial are possible for men; that virtue, and even charity, are not beyond human attainment; that envy, and hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, and the base voices of scandal, and the unmannerly jostlings in the throng, are no necessary elements of human life, but that men can live as they were meant to live together, in mutual love and honour; that men can utterly do without the things for which man most wildly struggles, and that men need most the very things which they are apt most utterly to disregard. They showed for all time that when any man stood on the dignity of being simply man—seeing no greatness but

<sup>1</sup> Montalembert, *Monks of the West*.

such as he could attain in the sight of God—he could be fearless in all danger, and could rise superior to all desires. It is true that their high ideal degenerated in foolish and fanatical hands. The accidents of it were mistaken for its *essence*, the means which it adopted for the end at which it aimed. When the hermits became stylites, living on the tops of pillars; when they became mere fakeers, “consecrating ignorance, self-torture, and dirt,” the salt had lost its savour, and it was time for it to be trodden under foot. { The earlier hermits were far more free from these errors, and were sufficiently enlightened to admit that their own lives were abnormal and exceptional. More than one story of them shows that while they believed their own mode of life to be eminently pleasing to God, they were not so ignorant or so self-satisfied as to imagine that it was the *sole* method of aiming at perfection, and were well aware that a holiness even more perfect than their own was attainable in “the common round and the trivial task.” } A voice came to

Antony in his cell—"Thou hast not yet attained to the goodness of a certain currier who lives in Alexandria." Antony took his staff and went to see him. "Tell me thy works, for on thy account have I come out of the desert." "I know not that I have done any good," said the currier; "and therefore morning and night I say that this whole city, from the greatest to the least, will be sacred before me." And when St. Macarius was told that he too was inferior to two women who lived in Alexandria, he found that they were simply two good wives, married to two brothers, who had done their duty, who had never quarrelled, and never spoken one foul, unkind, or worldly word. Thus we see how it is that even the least in the Kingdom of Heaven might be greater than these: and it was needful that even these saints should be reminded that great and noble as was their self-sacrifice, they yet lived in a world where the ideal of Christ was higher than that of Elijah, and that it was the Father of the spirits of all flesh who

had "made love and marriage, and little children, and sunshine, and flowers, the wings of butterflies, and the song of birds ; who rejoices in His own works, and bids all who truly reverence Him rejoice in them with Him."<sup>1</sup> We cannot imitate the outer life of Antony or Serapion ; it is not necessary, it is not desirable that we should ; but in an age of much unbelief and irreligion, of much gossip and detraction, of much anxiety and corruption, of much luxury and greed, we *can* learn their strong horror of sin ; their noble struggle for righteousness ; their entire simplicity of character ; their utter aloofness from the mean and greedy scramble of the world ; the sincerity with which they cultivated the duty of mutual forbearance ; the duty of absolute forgiveness of injuries which they strenuously practised ; their intense conviction that the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment. And as we learn these good lessons we can hallow, and broaden, and ratify them by the spirit of Him who sat at

<sup>1</sup> Kingsley, p. 334.

the banquets alike of the Publican and of the Pharisee ; who took the little children in His arms and blessed them ; who beautified with His presence and first miracle the humble marriage feast of Cana in Galilee. Whatever other ideals pass away, that one remains in its unchangeable applicability, in its infinite and eternal beauty.

The poet sings :—

{ “The old order changeth, giving place to the new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”<sup>1</sup>

And another poet sings :—

“The one remains, the many change and pass ;  
Heaven’s light alone remains, earth’s shadows flee ;  
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of eternity,  
Until death shiver it to atoms.”<sup>2</sup>

But in the life of Christ God hath fulfilled Himself for ever, and over that life death has no power. If we may gaze with profit for a moment on God’s saints, it is only, after all, because they dimly reflect the image of their

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley.

Saviour. Their example is only precious because it teaches us how they were followers of Him :—

“ The Saviour lends the light and heat  
That crowns His holy hill;  
The saints, like stars around His seat,  
Perform their courses still.

“ The Moon above, the Church below,  
A wondrous race they run,  
But all their radiance, all their glow,  
Each borrows of its Sun.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keble.



SERMON III.  
THE MONKS.



## THE MONKS.

*Obedience.*—“It is a great matter to live in obedience—to be under a superior, and not to be at our own disposing.”

“It is much safer to obey than to govern.”—*De Imitatione Christi*, I. ix.

*Chastity.*—“What is the reason why some of the saints were so perfect and contemplative?

“Because they laboured to mortify themselves wholly to all earthly desire, and therefore they could with their whole hearts fix themselves upon God, and be free for holy retirement. . . .

“But let us lay the axe to the root, that, being free from passions, we may find rest to our souls.”—*Id.* xi.

*Humility.*—“Here no man can stand unless he humble himself with his whole heart for the love of God.”—*Id.* xvii.

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“If it seem to you impossible to keep many commandments, then keep only this one little commandment, ‘Depart from evil, and do good,’ Ps. xxxvii. 27.”—**BENEDICT OF ANIUM.**

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“Nihil, si malus est, ambitiosius monacho, nihil avarius invenitur.”—**RAYMOND LULLI**, *Concord. Vet. et Nov. Test.* ii. 109.

“Quid prodest fratres exire in eremum, et in eremo habere cor Aegyptium? Quid prodest Aegypti ranas vitare et obscenis delectationibus concrepare?”—**BERENGAR.**

“Καν τὴν ἄκραν φιλοσοφίαν ἀσκῆς τῶν δέ λοιπῶν ἀπολλυμένων  
ἀμελῆς, ὀνδεύλαν κτήση· παρὰ Θεῷ παρρησίαν.”—CHYRSOST. *In Ep. 1 ad Cor. Hom. 25.*

“Virgines, viduas et maritatas, quae semel in Christo lotae sunt, si non discrepant caeteris operibus, ejusdem esse meriti.”—*Jovinian, i. 3.*

“Habitus et tonsura modicum confert; sed mutatio morum et integra mortificatio passionum verum faciunt religiosum.”—*De Imitatione Christi, i. 17.*

“The perfeccion of Christian lyving dothe not conciste in the dome ceremonies, weryng of the grey cootte, disgeasing ourselfe after strange fashions, doking and beckyng, in girding ourselfes with gurdle full of knots. . . . but the very tru waye to please God and to lyve a tru Christian man wytheout all yopocraie and fayned dissimulation, is sincerely declaryd unto us by our master Christe, his evangelists and apostles.”—*Surrender of Warden and Friars of St. Francis in Stamford.*

“Des Moines, c'est à dire des hommes qui ne songeaient à devenir ni évêques, ni archevêques, ni sénateurs, des hommes ayant incessamment présente la réponse d'un saint religieux à l'empereur Othon IV.: ‘Demandez-moi ce qu'il vous plaira,’ lui avait dit l'empereur, ‘et je vous l'accorderai.’ . . . ‘La seule chose que je vous demande,’ reprit le Moine, ‘c'est que vous pensiez au salut de votre âme.’”—FOISSET, *Vie de Lacordaire*, p. 222.

## SERMON III.

### *THE MONKS.<sup>1</sup>*

GAL. II. 20.

*“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.”*

“WAKE again,” so sings a poet and a good man,  
whose loss we still lament :—

“Wake again, Teutonic father ages,  
    Speak again, beloved primeval creeds ;  
Flash, ancestral spirit, from your pages,  
    Wake the greedy age to nobler deeds.

“Tell us how of old our saintly mothers  
    Schooled themselves by vigil, fast, and prayer,  
Learned to love, as Jesus loved before them,  
    While they bore the cross which good men bear.

“Tell us how our stout crusading fathers  
    Fought and died for God and not for gold ;  
Let their love, their faith, their boyish daring  
    Distance-mellowed, gild the days of old.

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<sup>1</sup> Preached at St. Andrew's, Holborn, March 28, 1878.

“Tell us how the sexless workers strонging,  
Angel-tended, round the convent doors,  
Wrought to Christian faith and holy order  
Savage hearts alike and barren moors.

“Ye who built the Churches where we worship,  
Ye who framed the laws by which we move ;  
Fathers, long belied and long forsaken,  
Oh, forgive the children of your love !”

And then, after thus confessing our culpable oblivion of those good and noble elements which shone amid all the errors and darkness of the past,—in order to show that it is not the passing form which we value or in any way desire to reproduce, but only the living spirit, he adds :

“Speak ! but ask us not to be as ye were !  
All but God is changing day by day ;  
He who breathes on man the plastic spirit  
Bids us mould ourselves, its robe of clay.

“Old decays, but foster new creations ;  
Bones and ashes feed the golden corn ;  
Fresh elixirs wander every moment  
Down the veins through which the live past  
Feeds its child, the live unborn.”<sup>1</sup>

I quote these lines, my friends, because they express, in part, the intended object of these

<sup>1</sup> Kingsley, *The Saints' Tragedy*.

Lenten Lectures. You will have seen, I trust, that I do not desire merely to interest you in the goodness of past ages, though I would gladly do so; nor do I desire in any way to revive old errors and obsolete institutions; nor is it at all my purpose to give you historical disquisitions void of moral significance; least of all do I wish to feed the vanities of our selfish and easy-going natures by showing how much we are superior to famous men of old and the fathers who begat us. No; but I do earnestly desire that we should together catch some lessons from the past; that while we thank God for what we believe to have been a clearer insight into His will, and a truer ideal of His service than that of many of His saintly workers in days of old, we may yet learn from them that deep, intense, self-sacrificing love for Him which ought not only to shelter them from crude and wholesale condemnation, but which ought to make them models to us of a more burning enthusiasm, of a more absolute devotion, of a more loving, a more holy, and a more

spiritual life. We have seen that the path of the martyrs is not yet closed for us, though we are not called to resist unto blood ; we have seen that we may learn something from the solitude, and the simplicity, and the unselfishness of the hermits, though our life is passed amid crowds of men ; let us, this evening, glance—for it can be no more—at the type of saintliness produced by monasticism, and let us see whether, while we carefully distinguish between that which was permanent and noble in it and that which was erroneous and evanescent, from that type too we may not learn.

2. Let me say at once that I believe the day of monasticism to be over. It did its work ; it fell into its decay ; it passed from poverty to honour, from honour to wealth, from wealth to vice, and from vice into corruption.<sup>1</sup> If ever it

<sup>1</sup> "This is the moral of all human tales,  
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past ;  
First Freedom, and then Glory ; when that fails,  
Wealth, Vice, Corruption,—Barbarism at last ;  
And History with all her volumes vast  
Hath but one tale."

BYRON, *Childe Harold.*

be revived it will not be by childish external imitation ; it will not be by playing at abbacy, or by wearing girdles and cowls, but in wholly different forms, such as may be needed by a wholly different age. } It was perhaps the best ideal possible in the times which called it forth,<sup>1</sup> and that it answers to a deep instinct of the human heart is seen by the fact that not Christianity only, but other religions also, such as Buddhism, have counted their monks by tens of thousands. } But yet the institution, under its old conditions, was tried and found wanting. It did not contain in itself the elements which sufficed to preserve it from ruin and decay. The dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. was very far from being an unmixed evil. There may have been—there probably was—exaggeration and lying in the charges brought against them ; there may have been, there *certainly* was, greed and cruelty in the seizure of their property ; yet that black book which was laid before Parliament in the Chapter-house

<sup>1</sup> See Archbishop Trench, *Mediaeval Church*, p. 104.

of Westminster Abbey contained ample and damning proof of the idleness and the pollution of only too many of them,<sup>1</sup> and it was time that the axe should be laid at the root of blighted and barren trees.<sup>2</sup> Roman Catholic writers themselves admit that there were idlers, there were hypocrites, there were debauchees, there were villains of the deepest dye among the monks in bad monasteries under relaxed discipline, under wicked abbots, in the days of their decline.<sup>3</sup> Long before the monks had to bear the scathing satire of Erasmus and Ulric von Hutten, the great mediæval painters, and even the gentle

<sup>1</sup> See the documents of the Surrenders of the Franciscans at Stamford, the Convent of St. Andrew's at Northampton, &c. —Collier, *Ecclesiastical History*, v. 12, &c.

<sup>2</sup> See Burnet, *History of the Reformation*, part i. ; Collier, *Ecclesiastical History*, iv. 299–308, v. 1.

<sup>3</sup> “As well we as others our predecessors called religiouse persons within yonder said monastery, taking on us the habite of outward vesture of the said rule, onley to the intent to lead oure liffes in the ydle quyetnesse, and not in the vertuose exercyse, in a stately estimacion, and not in obedient humlylte, have undre the shadowe or colour of the said rule and habite waynely, detestably, and also ungodly,” &c. &c.—“Surrender of St. Andrew's Priory, Northampton.”

Fra Angelico himself, had invariably painted monks among the companies of the lost ; and when Dante wishes to represent the punishment of the hypocrites he describes them as a painted people, walking with bent heads, watering the ground with their tears, and bending for all eternity under the crushing load of a monastic habit,—under brilliant cowls which dazzle the eye from afar, but which, as they approach, are seen to be but masses of gilded lead.<sup>1</sup> Bear in mind, my brethren, that if I speak to you of *holy* monasteries and *saintly* monks, it is because these, and these only, furnish us with new examples in our endeavour to imitate Christ ; and

<sup>1</sup> Dante, *Inferno*, xxiii :—

“Beneath we met a tribe bepainted fair,  
Who, weeping, paced the round, exceeding slow ;  
Jaded their looks and quite subdued with care.  
Cloaks they had on with cowls, which from the brow  
Reached to the eyes ; a fashion these displayed  
Resembling what the monks at Cologne show.  
With gilt, to dazzling, they are overlaid :  
Within 'tis leaden all ; a weight so sore  
That Frederick's seemed of stubble to be made.  
*O manile ponderous for evermore.*”

FORD.

not because we deny that there were also bad monasteries and abandoned monks. It was not a Christian, not a Catholic, but Voltaire himself who said that if monasticism became vicious, it was certain that secular life has always been more vicious ; yet secular life furnishes us with many an example of holiness, and it is for these that we look in monasteries too.

3. Monasticism grew naturally out of the necessities of the age in which it first appeared. The multitudes who flocked round hermits like Antony and Pachomius became the inevitable germ of monastic institutions. In the East this type of life, though it produced a Basil and a Chrysostom, was less fruitful than in the West, and its meditative silence degenerated soon into dreamy indolence and fanatical tumult.<sup>1</sup> But introduced into Europe by the example of St. Athanasius, and extended by the authority of St. Jerome, it assumed the manlier and more practical type of rigid duty, regular worship, and austere toil. During the two centuries after

<sup>1</sup> See Milman, *Latin Christianity*, i. 409.

St. Antony a different type of devotion had grown up and awaited its fitting organisation. The example of the early hermits had been mainly (as we have said) a personal protest for the awful importance of the *individual soul*. The example of the monks was mainly a social protest for the dignity and holiness of a *common life*. By the close of the fifth century the wild bands of Gothic barbarians were shattering the political fabric of the Empire to pieces. Amid homeless men, amid depopulated provinces, amid perishing institutions, amid the rising deluges of heathenism and barbarity, "A type of common life," it has been said, "was needed to preserve the inheritance of the old world and to offer a rallying point for the Christian forces that should fashion the new. Again this type was found in a system of rigid discipline."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, Sermon on *Disciplined Life*. See De Broglie, *L'Église et l'Empire*, vi. 471. "Confusion, corruption, despair, and death were everywhere; social dismemberment seemed complete. Authority, morals, arts, sciences, religion herself might have seemed condemned to irremediable ruin."—Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, ii. p. 1. (English Translation.)

What was it that had preserved the best elements of Christianity in the fourth century? The self-sacrifice of the hermits. What was it which saved the principles of law, and order, and civilisation? What rescued the wreck of ancient literature from the universal conflagration? What restrained, what converted the in-rushing Teutonic races? What kept alive the dying embers of science? What fanned into a flame the white ashes of art? What redeemed waste lands, cleared forests, drained fens, protected miserable populations, encouraged free labour, equalised widely-separated ranks? What was the sole witness for the cause of charity, the sole preservative of even partial education, the sole rampart against intolerable oppression? What force was left which could alone humble the haughty by the courage which is inspired by superiority to those things which most men desire, and elevate the poor by the spectacle of a poverty at once voluntary and powerful? What weak and unarmed power alone retained the strength and the determination to dash down

the mailed hand of the baron when it was uplifted against his serf, to proclaim a truce of God between warring violences, and to make insolent wickedness tremble by asserting the inherent supremacy of goodness over transgression, of knowledge over ignorance, of quiet righteousness over brutal force? You will say the Church; you will say Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Yes, but for many a long century the very bulwarks and ramparts of the Church were the monasteries, and the one invincible force of the Church lay in the self-sacrifice, the holiness, the courage of the monks.<sup>2</sup> Let those who have nothing but blind anathemas against monasticism remember that to it we owe the light of liberty and of literature; that there "learning trimmed her lamp and contemplation pruned her wings;" that the Benedictines instituted schools; that the Augustinians built cathedrals; that the Mendi-

<sup>1</sup> The work achieved for civilisation by the Catholic Church has been stated by no one more forcibly than by Comte, *Politique Positive*. See, too, Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, i. 275—283.

<sup>2</sup> See Milman, *Latin Christianity*, i. 5, 6, 250.

cant Orders founded hospitals ; that, as Leibnitz says, " He who is ignorant of, or despises, their services has only a narrow and vulgar idea of virtue, and stupidly believes that he has fulfilled all his duties towards God by some habitual practices accomplished with that coldness which excludes zeal and love."

4. Now he who gave to monasticism its best and most permanent form was *St. Benedict of Nursia*.<sup>1</sup> His story is briefly this. When he was a child his parents took him to be educated at Rome. Disgusted to the heart's core by the pollutions he saw around him, at the age of fourteen he fled from Rome and hid himself in a cave at Subiaco, among the woods on a wild hillside over the foaming waters of the Anio. He was supported with bread by a monk named Romanus, and there he strove to subdue every evil impulse in stern solitude and prayer. The place overlooked an old palace of Nero, and the

<sup>1</sup> See the sketches of him in Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, iv. ; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, i. 414-426 ; Bossuet, *Panégyrique de St. Benoît*, &c.

holy self-devotion of the Christian boy, compared to the enormous infamies of the pagan emperor, illustrate the vastness of the chasm between heathenism and Christianity. Gradually he was discovered, and disciples flocked to him. A body of monks, revering his sanctity and disregarding his warning that his rule would be very strict, compelled him to become their abbot ; but they soon grew weary of his rigorous severity, and afterwards attempted to poison him. Seeing that they were irreclaimable he left them, and again retired from them to his cave, round which twelve communities soon sprang up under his direction. But still pursued by hatred and plots, he left Subiaco and retired to an old temple and grove of Apollo, which, under his influence, the still semi-pagan rustics pulled down and destroyed. There, holy and happy,—allowing himself once a year to spend a day with his sister Scholastica, who had formed near him a community of nuns,—he lived for many years. And from the Life of him by St. Gregory—the saintly

biography of a saint—take but this one characteristic story. One night, just before the evening hymns, as he was gazing on heaven from the window of his cell, a mystic light shone round about him, and the whole world was brought before him, as if it had been gathered up into one ray of sunlight. He saw it—says the inscription which is read to this day on the tower in which he dwelt at Monte Cassino—“*Insperxit et despexit*”—“He saw it and he scorned it.”<sup>1</sup> The story of his interview with Totila the Goth, and the influence he exercised over the mind of that stern conqueror, shows the ascendancy which he had acquired by his personal holiness. It was at Monte Cassino that he drew up the immortal rule of the Benedictines ; and the monastery which he founded became one of the most famous in the world.

5. The keynote of that immortal rule, to which is due a very large part of the vast services rendered to the world by true and

<sup>1</sup> *Discours*, par le Père Hyacinthe.

uncorrupted monasticism, is *self-abnegation*. “Antony,” it has been admirably said, “had shown the foundation of individual freedom in self-conquest ; St. Benedict showed the foundations of social freedom in self-surrender.” That perfect obedience means perfect liberty ; that to lose our lives for Christ’s sake is to find them that complete submission to the will of God is a serene and tranquil empire over ourselves ;—these were his leading conceptions. Poverty, chastity, obedience had always been the triple vow of the monk—poverty in ages which were dying of opulence ; chastity in an age weakened by orgies ; obedience in an age perishing of disorders.<sup>1</sup> But to these St. Benedict added Work and Prayer. “*Ora et labora*” was the rule of his followers. It was Work, whether in the form of handicraft or study, which rescued so many a noble ancient poem and history from oblivion,<sup>2</sup> and made so many a waste into a

<sup>1</sup> Ozanam, *Études Germaniques*.

<sup>2</sup> Literary labour was mainly introduced among the Benedictines by Cassiodorus.—*Gieseler* ii, 13.

fruitful land. It was Prayer which inspired so many a hope amid the general despondency ; which re-conquered Europe into Christianity from the invading barbarians, which brought down the dew of God's blessing upon the fainting world. To them we owe the preservation of Roman literature, for the copyists of manuscripts were Benedictine monks. To them we owe our English Christianity, for Augustine of Canterbury was a Benedictine monk. To them we owe no small part of the protest which saved us from irresponsible despotism, for Lanfranc and Anselm were Benedictine monks. And very noble in its theory, very beautiful in its realisation of social life, was a Benedictine monastery under a holy abbot, faithful to its principles and vows. Equality reigned there : the proudest noble who came as a novice had to serve like the humblest peasant. Brotherhood reigned there : the rule was, "Submit yourselves to one another in the fear of God." Tenderness reigned there, for "There is always something," said St. Benedict, "to which the strong may

aspire, and from which the weak may not shrink." Humility reigned there, for if any one were appointed to even the humblest office, he had to fall on his knees before his brethren and beg their prayers, always ending his work with the words, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast holpen me and comforted me." Charity reigned there, for morning and evening the Lord's Prayer had to be said in the hearing of all, that all alike, brought face to face with the petition, that we may be forgiven as we forgive, " might cleanse themselves from every offence against Christian love."

I am told, my brethren, that some of you yearn to find some receipt for unity and peace. May you not be helped in the endeavour to obtain these Christian graces by some of those principles which made many a monastery a scene of order and holiness? You cannot and ought not to copy the monasticism of the monks, but you can and ought to copy this their ideal of brotherhood and tenderness, of humility and charity,

of work and prayer. “The Kingdom of God,” said the brave and good St. Hugo of Avalon, “is not made up of monks and hermits. God at the Day of Judgment will not ask a man why he has not been a monk, but why he has not been a Christian. Charity in the heart, truth on the tongue, chastity in the body, are the virtues which God demands.”<sup>1</sup> Some of you, in God’s providence, are called upon to live together in communities. Celibacy, which was to the monks a voluntary surrender, is to thousands of young men and young women, for long years together, an inevitable duty, imposed by God Himself. May not the yoke be lighter and easier if it be borne in the spirit of cheerful submission and humble self-sacrifice? Can you see nothing to hallow the lot to which God has called you in the rules of St. Benedict? Can you see no desire to imitate Christ in the unmurmuring and willing poverty which, in resigning all that was superfluous, was spared all anxiety about what was necessary?

<sup>1</sup> Froude, *Short Studies*, ii. 70.

Do you find nothing instructive in the state where “correction had all its firmness, condescension all its charity, subjection all its repose? where strength had its exercise, and weakness its support? where silence had its gravity, and words their grace?”<sup>1</sup> Might you not, if you tried to carry out these principles in your own families, in your own social surroundings, have all that was really holy and precious in monasticism without its perils? Might you not gain some of that peaceful calm, that noble gravity, that natural elevation which we admire in the pictures of the monks? Might you not even learn to say with St. Bernard, “Oh, merciful God, what consolations Thou preparest for the poor!”<sup>2</sup> Might you not so adorn with the Christian graces and virtues your home, or your place of business, as to be able to say of it what he said of his monastery, “It is good for us to be here; for here a man lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more

<sup>1</sup> Bossuet.

<sup>2</sup> “Deus bone, quanta pauperibus procuras solatia!”

swiftly, walks more carefully, rests more securely, dies more happily, is cleansed more speedily, is rewarded more abundantly"? Cowls, and girdles, and distinctive dresses would in these days be a futile anachronism ; but I do believe that the scores of young men and young women who, in the complexities of modern civilisation, and the necessities of commercial life, live together in large communities, might learn many a holy and beautiful lesson from the ideal of monastic holiness and yet might escape the peril of falling into one of its theoretic errors, or of adopting one of its needless and unnatural restrictions. No age has ever more needed a form of happy common life than our own, and I can imagine that thousands of young people would be the brighter and the holier by openly recognising some broad and simple religious rule,—some rule broad and simple as that which regulated the communities of the early Christians,—as the bond of union between them. What but good could possibly result from the open and

common recognition of such plain Christian principles as these from the rule of St. Benedict ?<sup>1</sup> “There is a good zeal which separates from vice and leads to God and to eternal life. . . . Let the brethren exercise their zeal with fervent love ; let them honour each other mutually ; let no one follow what he judges needful to himself only, but rather what is useful to others ; let them cherish fraternal love ; let them fear God ; let them love their abbots with sincere and humble charity ; above all, let them prefer nothing to Christ, who shall lead us to eternal life. Amen.” What but good could result from the endeavour to promote the three Benedictine virtues of silence, humility, and obedience ? and the three Benedictine occupations of worship, reading, and labour ? There is surely many a house of business where, without any formality, without any externalism, without the faintest tinge of Pharisaic hypocrisy, or sectarian self-importance, they who love the Lord might thus often commune with one another ; might

<sup>1</sup> Cap. 72 ; Milman, *Latin Christianity*, i. 421.

warn and comfort one another, amid the sorrows and temptations which beset the path of life; might speak the truth to each other with pure and simple hearts; might keep alive that sense of union which ought to result from an identity of duties and hopes.<sup>1</sup> The results might be small at first, but they would be very blessed. Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravians, even when he was a boy at school, founded a little society, which he called "The order of the grain of mustard-seed," and of which the only badge was a gold ring, inscribed with the words, "None of us liveth to himself."<sup>2</sup> Did not that grain of mustard-seed grow, in due course of time, into a great tree, so that the fowls of the air took shelter among its branches?

6. And, my brethren, as we may thus learn from this byegone type of saintly workers in their *social* life, in the principles (that is) which

<sup>1</sup> See Lacordaire, *Correspond. Inédite*.

<sup>2</sup> By way of giving form to this suggestion I print as an appendix the very simple rules of a Society of Christian Progress which has been formed within my own parish.

guided them as members of a community,—so most assuredly we may sit at the feet of very many of them in their *individual* holiness, and learn from them how better and more truly to follow Christ our Lord. We may find warmth in their footsteps, as faint and weary, and with many a sad stumble, we follow them across the sad world's snow. “Languor was not in their hearts, nor weakness in their words, nor weariness on their brows.”

“Servants of God ! or sons  
Shall I not call you? because  
Not as servants ye knew  
Your Father's innermost mind—  
His who unwillingly sees  
One of His little ones lost.”

It would be quite impossible to call before you the multitudes of noble figures with white robes and palms in their hands which would arise at the bidding of a student of history. Shall it be *St. Anselm*, after his stormy yet noble archiepiscopate, in his hour of death, like the humblest brother of his old monastery at *Bec*, laid on sackcloth, over which were

strewed ashes in the shape of the cross, and so, amid prayers and low chants, and fervent blessings calmly and happily breathing his last among his weeping friends? Shall it be *St. Edmund of Canterbury*, with the pallor of his beautiful countenance "growing a fair shining red," as he spoke in his lecture-room at Oxford of God and holy things; or as he sprinkled with dust the few coins, his sole possession, which lay loose in his window-sill,—saying ashes to ashes, dust to dust? Or shall it be *St. Thomas Aquinas*, with his daily prayer, "Give me, O Lord, a noble heart, which no earthly affection can drag down?" Or shall it be *St. Bonaventura* pointing in silence to his crucifix, when he was asked the source of his vast learning; and found washing the meanest vessels of his monastery, when they brought him the hat of a cardinal from Rome? Or shall it be *St. Bernardin of Siena*, whose pure and modest presence, even as a boy, hushed and overawed at once every evil word of his companions? Or shall it be a ruler like *Gregory the Great*, the son of a poor

carpenter, yet towering so high in the might of conscious integrity,—so utterly superior to the world by complete indifference to its interests,—that the guilty Emperor of Germany cowered in terror before his look, and at his feet? Or *St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, rebuking princes, upholding popes, firing all Europe to a new crusade, living in utter poverty, daily asking himself the stern question, “*Bernarde, ad quid venisti?*” “Bernard, wherefore art thou here?” These are but stray gleams from lives of steady radiance. But go into our National Gallery, or any great collection of pictures, and there—for amid the dust and weariness of life it is well to refresh our souls with things holy and beautiful—gaze on the pictures of *Fra Angelico* of Fiesole, if you would see the heavenly calm of spirit to which some of the monks attained. *Il beato*—as he is often called, for he was never canonised—was a monk of that famous monastery of San Marco, at Florence, which, at the same epoch, also sent forth the eloquent, fiery, undaunted *Savonarola*, to thunder his impassioned denunciations against

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the gross corruptions of the Church and of the world. In every cell of that monastery of San Marco is painted a crucifixion, by this holy painter. He painted them on his knees, and with streaming tears. Never would he receive one penny for them. Never would he alter a line when once painted, for he painted the faces of his visions, and looked on them as sent by inspiration. And inspired, indeed, they were, by the spirit of holy love ; by the stainless purity of a life which turned to the Divine as a flower to the sunlight ; by the calm, unsullied innocence of one whose soul was as a weaned child. Look at the tender rose, and gold, and violet—the delicate springtide colourings of his pictures ;—look at the angelic and saintly faces, so untroubled, so unlike those around us—pure and bright as the blue of heaven when there is not one cloud to stain it ;—look at the rapt, exquisite devotion, radiating outward as from an inward flame, which pervades the whole canvas as with a subtle lambency like the atmosphere of paradise. Alike the Sinaitic thunderings of Savonarola,

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and the “soft, silent pictures” of Fra Angelico were the outcome of life in that monastic self-sacrifice. It was the self-discipline of the monkish cell which fired the indignation and strengthened the courage of the one to face the storms of hatred and the agonies of martyrdom. It was the self-discipline of the monkish cell which made the other so despise the world that,—wholly dead to rank and ambition,—he refused the Archbishopric of Florence, and nominated a brother monk instead, who in his turn became the best and holiest Archbishop by whom Florence had ever been ruled. And how came it that types of virtue so different—the one so magnificent in its power and fearlessness, the other so perfect in its love and peace—were fostered in the same cloistral shade? It came, my brethren, from what Milton called “the irresistible might of weakness which shakes the world;” it came from the indefinite fruitfulness of self-sacrifice; it came from that spiritual force of chastity, of self-denial, “which knows how to weep, to pray, to love; which knows how to

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be poor, unknown, despised; harder than a diamond against pride and corruption; more tender than a mother towards all that suffers and that seeks.”<sup>1</sup>

7. It was a monk, my brethren, and one who may perhaps be called in some sense the last of the monks—it was Henri Lacordaire—who wrote those last words. It was a man who died, as it were, but yesterday—whom some of us may have seen and heard—who was a member of the French National Assembly; who was by far the most eloquent man of his day; who first reintroduced into France, and even into the pulpit of Notre Dame, the black-and-white robe of the Dominicans, which had not been seen there for years. And it is a characteristic of his stern self-discipline that always, after those splendid conferences, in which he thrilled the universal heart of Paris with his eloquence, and held its subtlest intellects entranced, he inflicted stern penance upon himself to prevent every possible access of vanity,

<sup>1</sup> Lacordaire (*Life*, by Dora Greenwell, p. 12).

and was found on one occasion hanging upon a cross in the crypt below. Now this great preacher, and pre-eminently good man, was no devotee of obsolete fanaticism ; he was a child of this nineteenth century. He was a Liberal in politics ; he was elected as a Liberal to represent a French constituency ; he said on his deathbed : “ I die a penitent Catholic and an impenitent Liberal.” Yet his ideal of saintliness was the ideal of the monk. With the famous De Lammens and the Comte de Montalembert he had edited *L’Avenir*, a Liberal newspaper, and when this fell under the suspicion of the authorities at Rome, he went with his companions to submit himself to the verdict of the Pope. After many delays and humiliations that verdict was given, and to his crushing sorrow it was hostile. But the spirit of holy obedience was strong in Henri Lacordaire. He made the submission which perhaps costs a man most dear—he submitted his intellect itself. More than that, at the zenith of his fame, in the fullest power and

splendour of his thrilling rhetoric,—he determined to hide his head under the cowl of a Dominican, and, if possible, reintroduce the monastic orders into France. The resolve seized him as he walked amid the ruined magnificence of ancient Rome, and thought of Antony, Basil, Augustine, Martin, Benedict, Columban, Bernard, Francis, Dominic, Ignatius. “In considering this luminous track,” he says, “the milky way of the Church, I discovered its creative principle in the threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience the keystone of the arch of the Gospel, and of the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ.” The world was amazed at his determination; amazed and half incredulous that a man should thus be willing to efface himself; should thus have the noble desire to descend.<sup>1</sup> But his friends were not amazed. One of the greatest of them<sup>2</sup> had walked home with him along the streets

<sup>1</sup> “Il faut savoir descendre devant les hommes pour s’éléver devant Dieu.”—Foisset, *Vie de Lacordaire*, ii. 143.

<sup>2</sup> The Comte de Montalembert.

of Paris, after one of the most signal triumphs of his oratory over a hostile audience. “He was neither intoxicated by it,” he writes, “nor overwhelmed. I saw that for him these little vanities of success were less than nothing—dust in the night.” So, giving up all, Lacordaire became a monk; and Rome, following her usual policy, did not spare his sensibilities. She tested his sincerity to the very utmost. She did not leave him with his companions; she did not place him in cities. She sent the greatest orator whom the Church of France has produced since the days of the immortal Bossuet, as a humble novice to the distant monastery of La Quercia. And here is his own account of it: ‘It is now eight days since I became a monk. I have been four days at La Quercia. After a little speech from the Provincial, each withdrew to his cell. It was very cold; the wind had veered to the north. We were yet in our summer dress, and our cells without fires. We knew no one; all the prestige, all the *empressement* which so recently surrounded

us, had vanished. We were alone with God, in presence of a life as yet unknown to us. Next day the cold was still more intense, and we only partially understood the course of our exercises. I had a moment of weakness. I looked back on all that I had left behind—a settled life, many certain advantages, many tenderly-loved friends; days filled with useful conversations by warm firesides; the thousand-joys of a life which God had blessed with outward and inward peace. To lose all this for ever was certainly paying very dear for the pride of doing a bold thing. I humbled myself before God, and asked of Him the strength I needed. Toward the close of the first day I felt that my prayer had been heard, and since then His consolations have been increasing on my soul with the gentleness of a sea that caresses the shore it covers.”

✓ My brethren, according to our notions the sacrifice may have been needless; we may fancy that he might have found better methods of obtaining the same high end; but let us be

certain of this, that no genuine and honest self-sacrifice, made in accordance with the best light we have, is ever unfruitful, or ever fails.] The great preacher never regretted, he always rejoiced in, what he had done. "Obedience costs something," he wrote to a friend; "but I have learnt by experience that it is, sooner or later, recompensed, and that God alone knows what is good for us."<sup>1</sup> "Since I have few virtues," he says in another place, "I wish at least on the day of judgment to be able to carry there the life of a priest without ambition."<sup>2</sup> You have heard what he thought eight days after he had made the great sacrifice of his life; would you hear whether he at all changed his opinion at the close of it? "What has been my strength," he wrote, "during my whole life, has been precisely not to choose what I should have wished, but to be always at the orders of God, whose will manifests itself by the often

<sup>1</sup> *Correspond. Inédite*, p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Corresp. de M. Lacordaire et de Madame de Swetchine*, par le Comte de Falloux, p. 24.

unforeseen course of events. It is now thirty years since I left the world. During those thirty years God has twelve times changed my residence, and fifteen times my position, and I have scarcely ever done what I should myself have chosen. What reassures me is that I am not doing what I wish." "I am committing suicide," he once said, in accepting a high post, "but it is God who wills it: that is my strength, my support, my life."<sup>1</sup>

Now, my brethren, time does not permit that I should say very many things which would result naturally from the slight and rapid glance which we have taken at an effort after holiness, which, as you see even to this very day, produced very beautiful and very memorable results; which has enriched the world by the heritage of noble services, and sustained the Church with the viaticum of glorious examples. But this surely we may say—that though monasticism has perished, probably for ever, we, though we never enter the cloistered cell,

<sup>1</sup> Foisset, *Vie de Lacordaire*, p. 261.

may still, in the trivial round and the common task, borrow from it its truest and most exalted elements;—its victory over carnal passions; its superiority to the allurements of the world. And in aiming at these, by ways which we deem better and more sure, we may try to attain at least to some faint reflex of those Christ-like virtues which we rightly revere in these our elder brothers in the great family of Christ, who have

“Gone before  
And left their trail of light upon the shore.”

Of superiority to worldly interests I may speak another time; but suffer me to say one last word now on the conquest over sensual temptations. I cannot dwell on this; but I do believe that if the monks of old exaggerated their danger, and—it is very sad to think—sometimes enormously increased that danger by the very means which they designed to avert it,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See some very remarkable testimonies of monks and hermits Gieseler's *Ecclesiastical History*, ii. 4.

yet we in this age greatly underrate it, and are not sufficiently on our guard against it. It is a mistake to speak of youthful passions, as though carnal passions were only youthful. The saints, who meditated deeply and for long years on the deceitfulness of the heart of man, knew better than this. They knew, as St. Paul knew, that the conquest over the carnal heart is not to be won without a struggle, and not to be won in a moment of time. Long, agonising, terrible were their conflicts. With them life was, in no mere figure of speech, a mortification of sensuality, a crucifixion with Christ. St. Jerome, after years of toil and fasting in his rocky cell at Bethlehem, assailed by evil imaginations, beats his worn breast with the stone which lay ever at his side.<sup>1</sup> The bed of briars is still shown in which St. Benedict, while yet a boy, rolled his naked body, till it was well-nigh one

<sup>1</sup> "Ille igitur ego, qui ob Gehennae metum tali me carcere ipse damnaveram, scorpionum tantum socius et ferarum, saepe choris intereram puellarum. Pallebant ora jejuniis, et mens desideriis aestuabat in pallido corpore."—Jer. *Ep. ad Eustoch.* 18, and to a similar effect *Nilus*, ii. 140.

wound, that he might be cured utterly from unholy thoughts, and where St. Francis planted roses in honour of his victory.<sup>1</sup> St. Bernard, horrified at a bad impulse, rushed out, and stood till life and sense had both well-nigh left him, neck deep in an icy pool. And sometimes we read how they achieved, after long effort, the final victory: how they got possession of,<sup>2</sup> were masters of, their own bodies; “made their passions come to heel by a stern will the servant of a tender conscience;”<sup>3</sup> assumed and maintained a “serene and tranquil empire over themselves.” We read how St. Nilus,<sup>4</sup> finding it impossible to get rid of a sensuous temptation, though he wrestled with himself till the sweat trickled from his forehead, threw himself with contrition to the ground and prayed —“Lord, Thou knowest my weakness; pity me, and ease me of my conflict;” and how

<sup>1</sup> Milman, *Latin Christianity*, i. 418; Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, ii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> κτᾶσθαι. 1 Thess. iv. 4; Luke xxi. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Huxley.

<sup>4</sup> Neander, vi. 201.

in a vision the figure of the Crucified stood at his right hand, made over him thrice the sign of the cross, and, vanishing, left him the victor over all his worst temptations. We read how St. Hugo of Avalon, at the age of forty, not yet utterly dead to the flesh, in spite of the harsh lifelong austerities of his rule, was assailed by emotions so violent that he afterwards said he would rather face the pains of Gehenna than encounter them again ; and one night, when the agony reached its crisis, wrestled like Jacob in wild prayer, till he saw the dead prior, who had admitted him as a boy into the Chartreuse, lean over him, and seem to draw from his bosom a fiery mass, and left him thenceforth strong and cured for life.<sup>1</sup> My brethren, if these great saints of God found it so very hard to be delivered from unholy thoughts and acts in lives spent in the sternest and most unsparing self-discipline, is it not mere hypocrisy for men in luxurious, self-indulgent, full-fed lives, to assume that it

<sup>1</sup> Froude, *Short Studies*, ii. 57.

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is very easy? Is it not true, as Dante sang, that—

“Not on flowery beds, nor under shade  
Of canopy reposing, heaven is won?”

Is there not a deep meaning in the verse of the old familiar hymn—

“Shall we be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
When others fought to win the prize,  
And sailed through bloody seas?”

Is not the Christian life a race—a wrestling—a warfare in which there is no discharge? Even if, by God’s blessing, we have passed to any degree unscathed through the storms of youth, it is an illusion to think that all is well. Middle-age religion, if it be not deep and true religion, is too often “like the rotting tree-trunks, which do but mimic the semblance of some ghostly or human life;”<sup>1</sup> and we have all deep need of that promise of David, “Non timebis a dæmonio meridiano,” thou shalt not fear from the demon

<sup>1</sup> Martineau.

of the noonday. "That demon of the noonday is the demon of maturity, a second youth which comes to us about the middle of life, more dangerous even than the first, and in which even tried virtues often fail."<sup>1</sup> Oh, my brethren, this much at least all of us, alike the elder and the young, may learn from these saintly workers, not to sleep on the post of danger; not to dream that the enemy is dead; to be earnest, to be simple, to be self-denying, to be resolute, to be abstinent, to be sincere. Not indeed in celibacy, but if God permits us, in honourable marriage, or in the hope of a pure and faithful betrothal;—not in self-torture, but yet in earnest watchfulness; not in extreme fasting, but in habitual and careful moderation; not in morbid self-introspection, but in thorough and vigorous occupation; not in enfeebling the body by maceration, but by filling its hours of work with strenuous and cheerful activity, and its hours of leisure with bright thoughtfulness and many a silent prayer;—by these blessed means

<sup>1</sup> Lacordaire, *Correspond. Indite*, p. 459.

we too, even in the midst of the world, may attain to the spirit which is dead to the world: we may be keeping under our body and bringing it into subjection; may, in no mere formula, but in truthful figure be “crucified with Christ.” Deeply, I fear, does this age need to take to heart the stern, inexorable necessity for such self-conquest. Surely this is the essence of all Lenten lessons. It was the central conception of monasticism, it may well be the central lesson of modern civilisation. “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to subdue the lusts thereof.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 12-14.



**SERMON IV.**  
**THE EARLY FRANCISCANS.**

**I 2**



### ST. DOMINIC.

“ Domenico fu detto, ed io ne parlo  
Sì come dell’ agricola che Cristo  
Elesse all’ orto suo per aiutarlo.  
Ben parve messo e famigliar di Cristo  
Che ’l primo amor che ’n lui fu manifesto  
Fu al primo consiglio che die Cristo.”

*Paradiso, xii. 70-75.*

“ He was called Dominic. I speak of him  
As of a tiller of the earth whom Christ  
To His own vineyard called to be His aid.  
Well was he seen Christ’s friend and messenger,  
For the first act of love in him observed  
Obeyed the chiefest precept left by Christ.”

POLLOK.

### ST. FRANCIS.

“ Francesco e povertà per questi amanti  
Prendo oramai nel mio parlar diffuso.”

*Paradiso, xi. 74.*

“ Francis and Poverty, these loving ones  
Thou mayst collect to be from this long strain.”

POLLOK.

## THE ORDERS OF ST. FRANCIS AND ST. DOMINIC.

“Je vois sa vie toute resplendissante de cette divine clarté qui est au dedans de nous, et où nous découvrons, comme dans un globe de lumière, l'agrément immortel de l'honneur et de la vertu.”—BOSSUET.

“O vitae tuta facultas  
Pauperis, angustique lares, O munera nondum  
Intellecta Deum.”

Luc. *Phars.* v. 231.

“Dicite, Pontifices, in sancto quid facit aurum?”—PERS.  
*Sat.* v. 69.

“L' Esercito di Cristo, che si caro  
Costo a riarmar, dietro alla 'nsegna  
Si movea tardo, suspeccioso e raro ;  
Quando lo 'mperador che sempre regna  
Provvide alla milizia ch' era in forse  
Per sola grazia, non per esser degna ;  
E, com' è detto, a sua sposa soccorse  
Con duo campioni, al cui fare, al cui dire  
Lo popol disiato si accorse.”

*Paradiso*, xii. 37.

“Slow, and full of doubt,  
And with thin ranks, after its banner moved  
The army of Christ (which it so dearly cost  
To reappoint), when its imperial Head,

Who reigneth ever, for the drooping host  
Did make provision, thorough grace alone,  
And not through its deserving. For thou heard'st  
Two champions to the succour of his spouse  
He sent, who by their deeds and words might join  
Again this scattered people."

CARY.

"Occurrit importuna petitio qua omnes transeuntes per terras  
adeo abhorrent fratrum occursum, ut eis timeant quasi praedonibus  
obviare."—BONAVENTURA (*Gieseler*, iii. 24).

"Omnia pro Christo relinquere et ipsum sequi invitando in  
bonis operibus opus perfectionis est, *Luc.* xviii. 22. Glossa:  
bene operando non dicit mendicando: nam hoc prohibetur ab  
Apostolis."—GUL. DE STO. AMORE, *De Periculis Novissimorum  
Temporum.*

"Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have  
not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—1 COR. xiii. 3.



## SERMON IV.

### *THE EARLY FRANCISCANS.<sup>1</sup>*

PROV. X. 22.

*“The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.”*

1. IT happened one day that St. Thomas of Aquinum, the “Angel of the Schools,” who was a Franciscan monk, was sitting in the Vatican with Pope Innocent IV., when masses of gold and silver were being carried into the Papal treasury. “You see,” said the Pope, with a touch of self-satisfaction, “the age of the Church is past when she could say, ‘Silver and gold have I none.’” “Yes, Holy Father,” replied the Angelic Doctor, “and the day is also past when she could say to the paralytic—‘Take up thy bed and walk!’”

<sup>1</sup> Preached in St. Andrew's, Holborn, April 4, 1878.

2. The anecdote bears very directly on the work of those great saints, who once more—in the beginning of the thirteenth century—gave fresh impetus to the half-spent forces of previous moral revolutions. The work of the Hermits was over, because the age no longer needed their intense protest for the awfulness of the immortal soul. The work of the Monks had shown the possibility and the usefulness of a common religious life at an epoch of wild confusion; but, though their work was not over, they had sunk into too close conformity with the corrupting influences of luxurious prosperity. Once more—not in such days of social dissolution as Antony's, nor in such days of political disruption as Benedict's, but in a Church at the very zenith of her splendid predominance and ambitious ease—there was need to fan, out of the whitened embers of religion, the smouldering flame of zeal and love. That work was achieved mainly by two men—St. Dominic of Spain and St. Francis of Assissi. St. Dominic founded the *Ordo Praedicatorum*, or Preaching Friars;

St. Francis the Fratres Minores, or Mendicant Friars. They both bore witness to the need of energy and self-denial; but I shall speak almost solely of the latter. I do so partly because he was the *originator* of that ideal of absolute poverty which, for a time, produced rich fruit; and partly because his character is infinitely more attractive than that of his stern contemporary. That St. Dominic was a sincere and holy man, we do not dream of questioning. He whom Dante calls

“The loving cavalier  
Of Christian faith, the athlete sanctified,  
Fond to his own, and dreadful to his foes;”<sup>1</sup>

the man who lived so much in prayer; the man who could fearlessly rebuke great Papal legates for their pride and ostentation; the man who, even in his youth, having given away all that he had in charity, was so distressed by the tears of

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“L'amoroso drudo  
Dalla Fede cristiana, il santo atleta,  
Benigno a' suoi ed a 'nimici crudo.”

*Paradiso*, xii. 55.

a poor woman, who wished to redeem her son from slavery, that he offered himself to be sold into slavery in her son's place,—was one whose holiness and self-devotion it would be inexcusable for the comfortable and conventional Christians of this age to deny. But, however wide may be the catholicity of our admiration, we cannot feel specially drawn to one who instituted the vain and mechanical iterations of the rosary;<sup>1</sup> to one who, however sincere in his zeal—who, however much he may have been convinced that “agonies of pain and blood shed in rivers was better than the soul spotted and bewildered with (what he deemed to be) mortal sin”—yet comes to us with the traditions of a persecutor; looms black and ghastly to us through a century darkened with the Tophet-smoke of the Inquisition, and from the midst of men whose robes were drenched and dyed with Albigensian blood. He presented, doubtless, a very different aspect to a different age.

<sup>1</sup> See Alban Butler, *Lives of the Saints*, August 4. It is a recital of 15 *Pater-Nosters*, and 150 *Ave-Marys*.

Dante sees him like one of the shining cherubs the *spiritus lucentes* of Paradise, and says of him and of St. Francis :—

“One all seraphic was in ardent love ;  
The other was for wisdom on the earth  
A radiation of cherubic light.”<sup>1</sup>

But though the workman be saved, the work is burned ; though he and his followers built, or meant to build, on the one foundation, yet that which they built—the cruelty of remorseless persecution, the fanaticism of bigoted intolerance, the furies of anathema and interdict—was a superstructure of worthless hay and stubble, fit only to be consumed in God’s revealing fire, and winnowed to the four winds with His purging fan.<sup>2</sup> And therefore from the

<sup>1</sup> “L’un fu tutto serafico in ardore ;  
L’altro per sapienza in terra fue  
Di cherubica luce uno splendore.”

*Paradiso xi. 57.*

<sup>2</sup> Dante (*Paradiso*, x. 94, and xi. *ad finem*) speaks in words of grave warning about the degeneracies of both Dominicans and Franciscans ; and how rapid this degeneracy was may be seen in the passage quoted from Bonaventura and others in the Prefatory Extracts, p. 119.

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ferocity and gloom of the Dominicans we will turn to the angelic gentleness of Francis of Assissi—fit successor of Antony, the greatest of the hermits, and Benedict, the wisest of monastic founders. “Antony,” it has been said, “had shown to an effete and dying age an image of the strength of man in fellowship with God. Benedict had reared on the ruins of the desolated empire the fabric of an abiding society. It remained for Francis, in the midst of a Church endowed with all that art, and learning, and wealth, and power could give, to re-assert the love of God to the poorest, the meanest, the most repulsive of His children. “A man,” he said, “is as great as he is in the sight of God, and no greater.” “If I lived to the end of the world,” he said, again, “I should need no other book than the record of the Passion of Christ.” Humbling himself by every mortification beneath the lowliest, he yet did not mistake his mission. Once, when he was suddenly seized by robbers, and they roughly questioned him as to who he was, he replied,

with a prophetic voice, "I am a herald of the Great King."<sup>1</sup>

3. Of all the men who have ever lived there is probably not one who has ever made it so absolutely his aim, as did St. Francis, to reproduce, in letter as well as in spirit, the very life of Christ. Among the hills and villages of Umbria he strove to live with his few first followers the very same life that our Lord had lived with His apostles on the shores of Galilee and in the villages of Palestine. You will say that there was in this a fundamental mistake; that the true imitation of Christ is the obedience to His commandments; that the unreasoning reproduction of external circumstances was, in the first place, impossible, and in the second erroneous—a literal misinterpretation, a spiritual anachronism. You may say, when you have heard how St. Francis lived, that he was fundamentally mistaken in supposing that the free and noble poverty of Christ was either mendicancy or pauperism; that he was foolishly literal in

<sup>1</sup> Westcott.

making of universal application the special directions given for a short time to the Seventy or the Twelve ; that there was want of common sense in trying to imitate amid the keen mountain breezes of the Apennines the tropic dress of the Plain of Gennesareth ;—that the entire system of the Friars Minor, as St. Francis instituted it, was liable to be entangled with the ignorant misconception that poverty and suffering are, in *themselves*, dear to God as *ends*, and not as means. Well, on the one hand, to speak thus is merely to judge the thirteenth century by the totally different conceptions of the nineteenth, and on the other hand—let the tree be known by its fruits. Call St. Francis, if you will, a sublime madman, a fanatical enthusiast. Insult and misrepresentation have ever been the portion in their lifetime of God's most earnest children.

“Enough ! high words abate no jot or tittle  
Of what, while life still lasts, shall still be true ;  
Heaven's great ones must be slandered by earth's little,  
And God makes no ado.”

But still it remains true that no human being who has had the faith to take Christ at His very word,—be it even in unlettered ignorance,—has ever been allowed to find His promise fail. On one occasion Fra Masseo, a handsome, burly, eloquent, and somewhat self-satisfied friar, and one of the earliest converts to the order, meeting St. Francis as he came—a gaunt, worn, pitiable figure—out of the wood where he was constantly in prayer, burst out with the exclamation : “Why to thee? why to thee?” “What say you?” asked Francis, surprised at the interruption. “I say,” answered Masseo, “why should all the world run after thee, and every one desire to see, and hear, and obey thee? Thou art not handsome; thou art not noble; thou art not learned; then why to thee? Why does all the world run after thee?”<sup>1</sup> The saint was

<sup>1</sup> This and many of the facts here narrated of St. Francis may be found in the admirable biography by Mrs. Oliphant, which is mainly taken from the lives of him by the Three Companions; by Bonaventura; by Thomas of Celano; and from the Fioretti. The latter—a delightful series of legends—is translated by Ozanam in his *Poëtes Franciscains*.

too modest to reply to this strange apostrophe—but we may answer for him. It was because he was utterly sincere ; it was, as we have seen, again and again, from the invincible strength of his self-sacrifice. “That man,” says Sir Arthur Helps, “is very strong and powerful who has no more hope for himself: who looks not to be loved any more; to be admired any more; to have any more honour or dignity; and who cares not for gratitude; but whose sole thought is for others, and who only lives on for them.”<sup>1</sup> He that utterly despises the world shall rise above the world ; he that does not fear to be made a slave, can become more potent than a king ; if any man will be great among you, let him be your servant. This man, who was dressed in rags, who fed on scraps, who was unlearned and simple, and had sold cloth in a shop, did more for the Church than the most absolute Pontiff, whose stirrup was ever held for him by princes, or who put his haughty foot upon the neck of Emperors. The Church which *they* helped to

<sup>1</sup> *Realmah.*

ruin, this beggar,—this simple wanderer, this glorious pauper of Christ, this man who had become a fool for wisdom's sake,—inspired and glorified. “You prelates, provided you eat up your vast revenues and drink the wine of your vineyards, care nothing for the poor people,” said Philip Augustus of France very bitterly to the French bishops ; and a Church of which such things can be said is already sapped at its foundations. One day when Innocent III. was walking on a terrace in the Lateran,—that Pope Innocent who had made Otho of Germany tremble ; who had reduced Philip Augustus to submission ; who had sent

“Pandulph, of fair Milan, cardinal,”<sup>1</sup>

to bring King John of England to his knees—while this stateliest of imperial Pontiffs, at the summit of his grandeur, was meditating on the government of nations in his silent pacing to and fro—he was disturbed by the approach of a humble brown figure in peasant's garb. With a

<sup>1</sup> He was, however, only a legate, not cardinal.

gesture of contempt the great Pope motioned him away; but that night he had two dreams—the one was that a tall and beautiful palm-tree grew up at his very feet; the other that he saw the grand church of St. John Lateran falling into ruins, when the same poor brown figure whom he had repelled, ran forward and upheld it with his hands. Admonished by these dreams, or with a flash of insight into the power of enthusiasm, he sent for Francis and gave a general sanction to his organisation of the Fratres Minores, the "Lesser Brothers,"—the lowest and humblest, but destined to be the most powerful order, the most militant missionaries of the Church. Now which was the most really influential, the magnificent Pope or the ascetic visionary? Did not God make the counsels of princes of none effect, but bring the poor out of his misery and make him households like a flock of sheep? Almost every vast design of the mighty Innocent was, even in his own lifetime more or less of failure;<sup>1</sup> but the order of St.

<sup>1</sup> Milman, *Latin Christianity*.

Francis of Assissi soon multiplied to myriads, and was to be counted by thousands even at his early death. The humility and devotion of Francis gave fresh force to that Church which the ambition of Innocent had weakened by overstrain. And yet, happy in his wise ignorance, profound in his unlearned simplicity, his whole secret was to follow Christ, and to hold cheap what the world desires. What is at this moment occupying the vast majority in this city—the vast majority, it may be, of us even in this congregation? Is it not some form or other of self-interest? Is it not, in some form or other, money, or pleasure, or ambition? Do not the streets, the shops, the offices, buzz with talk of money? “There are three things that make up all business, which enter into all the intrigues, which inflame all the passions, which actuate all the eagerness of the world. St. Francis saw that they were illusions; he saw that riches enslave, that honours overpower, that pleasures effeminate the heart. He saw that these broad roads lead many to perdition. For himself he

sought another road. He found riches in poverty; joy in suffering; glory in self-abasement.”<sup>1</sup> At the age of twenty-five he burst every bond of family, of position, of comfort, and, stripped bare of every possession, descended from the hill of Assissi to show the world the most complete example of the madness of the cross. “But far from revolting the world, he subdues it! The more this sublime fanatic abased himself in order to make himself more worthy, by his humility and the contempt of men, to be the instrument of love, the more did his greatness shine and radiate afar, and the more did men fling themselves in his path, some ambitious to despoil themselves of everything like him, some eager, at least, to gather up his words of inspiration”;<sup>2</sup>—those words, which, as Thomas of Celano witnesses, “penetrated like glowing fire to the inmost depths of the heart.”

4. Let me, then, as briefly as I can, tell you one or two of the facts of his life. Francesco

<sup>1</sup> Bossuet.

<sup>2</sup> Montalembert, *Elizabeth d'Hongroie*, i. 61.

Bernardone was the son of a merchant of Assissi, in Umbria. In his boyhood and youth he was the gayest of the gay, the flower of the Assissian youth, pure and kind, but the bright leader of pleasure-loving companions ; living above his station, as though he had been a prince's son ; a soldier, a singer, with many a vain ambition, though not without stirrings of deeper hope. When he was twenty-five a dangerous sickness made the whole world look different to him, and changed the current of his thoughts. Visions seemed to summon him to some great work. He saw a palace full of pieces of armour all signed with the cross, and when he asked to whom these belonged, was told : "To thee and to thy soldiers ;" and felt himself bidden to be a soldier ; but not as he at first supposed in earthly armies. As he knelt before the crucifix he thought that it thrice said to him : "Go, rebuild My house, which, as thou seest, is falling to ruins ;" and it was years before his simple and faithful heart comprehended that the Church which

he was bidden to rebuild was, not as he at first supposed, the material structure, but the living congregation. In the very midst of his youthful gaiety deep hushes of emotion came over him. He feels his head overshadowed by the hands of "invisible consecration." The life of Christ seizes possession of his thoughts with overmastering sway. One day, riding across a valley, he sees a leper, turns from him for one instant with irrepressible disgust, then in shame dismounts, fills the poor sufferer's hand with alms, and humbly kisses it. Then, riding on, he looks back for an instant, and lo! there is no leper there, and he believes that he has had a vision of "the poor man Christ Jesus"—an image of whom he sees ever afterwards in all who suffer and are poor. He visits Rome; flings his whole purse of money as an offering on the floor of St. Peter's, and, going out, strips off his gay robes, exchanges them for the ragged gaberdine of a beggar, and sits begging on the steps. Called, as he fancies, to restore the ruined Church of

St. Damian, he impetuously takes some of his father's goods, sells them, and brings the money to the priest. His father, regarding the young man as a lunatic, chooses to treat this as a theft, imprisons, and cruelly oppresses him. Francis appeals to the bishop, and in full court not only gives back the money to his father, but strips himself of his very clothes, down to the hair shirt which he wore next to his skin, and, covered by the pitying bishop with his own *pallium*, calls the spectators to bear witness that "he is no longer the son of Pietro Barnadone, but a servant of God." Then begins his special work. He rebuilds three crumbling churches of his native town, begging for the stones, and laying them with his own hands. Though naturally fond of delicacies, he began literally to beg for his daily food, and to live only on the unpalatable scraps which were given him. One day in church, as he listened to the words of the Gospel: "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves.

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And as ye go, preach, saying : The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"—the words flashed in upon his soul with overpowering force, as though the light of God had moved over the graven gems of the Urim. "Here," he exclaimed, "is what I have wanted ; here is what I have sought!" and with literal simplicity then and there he flung away shoes, and staff, and purse, and bound his tunic round him with a rope. Companions began to join him. Seeking guidance from God, he bade the priest take the missal, sign it with the cross, lay it on the altar, and open it three times ; intending to take for his future guidance the *Sortes Biblicae* thus solemnly invoked. The first time the book opened at—"Go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor." The second time at—"Take nothing for your journey." The third time at—"He who will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." Francis and his few friends took the commands literally, and the very first incident that followed showed that their practical



protest was needed, and was not in vain. Bernardo, a rich and noble citizen, determined to sell all and join the little company. Seeing them give so amply to the poor, a greedy priest came and claimed additional payment for some stones which he had given to Francis when he was building St. Damian's. "Wondering at his avarice, but, like a true servant of the Gospel, not wishing to contend with him," Francis put both hands into Bernardo's lap, and filling them with gold, flung it into the priest's lap, saying, with a little touch of contempt, "Have you yet enough, Sir Priest?" "I have enough, my brother," said the priest in meek compunction, and from that day became a better and holier man.<sup>1</sup>

And from that day, too, the order grew and prospered. They lived in a bare hut; they preached, they prayed; they begged their daily food; they tended the sick; they gave of what they had to all the poor who came to them; they possessed nothing, either for

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Oliphant, *Francis of Assisi*, p. 43.

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their order or for themselves; and thus making Poverty their bride amid the mad desire of their age for wealth, they introduced nobler aims and holier feelings into a luxurious and ambitious Church, into an oppressive, blood-stained, cruel world. It was a grand, emphatic protest which appealed to the imagination of all men. Nothing can show more forcibly the power of this appeal than the fact that St. Francis, as the chosen bridegroom of Poverty, was celebrated alike in the paintings of Giotto and in the verse of Dante. When men saw Francis at the table of nobles and cardinals, bright and courteous, but while he went on talking, unostentatiously deluging his plate with cold water, or quietly sprinkling a few ashes over the rich food, with the half apology, "Brother ash is pure," they saw at least that these men had other thoughts and other hopes than the fat monks, and immoral priests, and splendour-loving bishops, of whom the Church in that day was full.

Thus humbly and simply did St. Francis live

with his brethren, caring for others, not for himself. Before his death he founded the order of the Poor Ladies of Clare, for women ; and (which was a memorable advance on all previous reforms) the order of Tertiaries ;—a simple rule of faith and prayer for married people, and people in the world, who could not join his order to the full. For St. Francis recognised, by true and humble instinct, that God's world of fathers, and mothers, and children, and workday people was not all lost and ruined, but that mercy was open and salvation possible even to those who walked on the fair and holy way of nature ; that God was also the master of those who lived in comfort, and was able to call them by His grace, as they trod the common path of life “though a harder path, which was not that of nature,—a thorny road, above the common flowery levels of humanity, was that which he had chosen for himself.”<sup>1</sup> He journeyed to the Crusaders at Damietta, and earnestly courting martyrdom, went at the most imminent risk to

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Oliphant, p. 204.

convert the Sultan, accompanied by but a single brother,—offering, if the Sultan would embrace the faith, to walk through fire. And then his long, but sweet and humble austerities began to do their natural work. No one can with impunity violate the clear indications of nature. Though scarcely past middle age, he fell into grievous sickness. It was in one of the fainting ecstasies of his later years that his brethren believed him to have received, on Monte Alverno, the stigmata—the five wound-marks of the crucifixion of his Lord.<sup>1</sup> His eyes, worn and blinded with perpetual tears, began to fail. It was deemed necessary that he should undergo an operation with a burning iron. “O brother Fire,” he said, “the Most High hath created thee of most exceeding comeliness, beautiful, useful; be thou to me, in this my hour, merciful—be courteous”; and when the operation

<sup>1</sup> “Nel crudo sasso intra Tevere ed Arno  
Da Cristo prese l’ ultimo sigillo  
Che le sue membra du anne portarno.”

DANTE, *Paradiso*, xi.

was over, he told his friends that God had been with him, and he had felt no pain. Then came his last hour. Prostrate on ashes, on the bare earth, naked, till one in pity covered him with a garment, in great suffering, yet in exceeding peace, he died, saying to his brethren almost with his last words, "I have done my part; may Christ teach you to do yours."

5. My brethren, that life of the cross was very richly fruitful; fruitful in proportion to its transcendent self-denial. St. Francis of Assissi was "a living epistle known and read by all men." His order, in that very century, produced among its brethren lives so powerful and so famous as those of St. Bonaventura and St. Thomas of Aquinum; among its Tertiaries lives so noble and so saintly as those of St. Louis of France and St. Elizabeth of Hungary. St. Francis furnished one more instance of the truth that "the grandest revolutions in the history of the universe have been accomplished by its beggars, and, as the world thought, its fools... Let a man, in any age, go forth with the fire of God in

him, and the force he wields, the mastery he wins, the new life he quickens, pours silent contempt on gold. The richest in such seasons are those who give most, not those who have most. It fills the Beatitudes with a wonderful meaning, and shows the sorrows and straits of poverty overflowed by the riches and joys of God.”<sup>1</sup>

6. For with all his sorrows and privations, Francis, too, like Antony, like Benedict, was happy. It was not that in his supreme self-sacrifice he had forgotten all human feelings, and never felt disturbed by the natural yearning for the sweet home joys which are not only natural, but beautiful and innocent. There is a “touching story of how, one night, in a tumult and fever of feeling, he sprang out of bed, and was seen by a brother who was praying in his cell to heap together seven masses of snow in the cold moonlight, and said, ‘Here is thy wife ; these four are thy sons and daughters ; the other two are thy servant and thy handmaid ; and for all these thou art bound to provide. Make haste then, and

<sup>1</sup> J. Baldwin Brown, *Misread Passages of Scripture*, p. 24.

provide clothing for them, lest they perish with cold. But if the care of so many trouble thee, be thou careful to serve our Lord alone.' He dissipates the dream," says the author of his last biography, "by the chill touch of the snow, by still nature hushing the fiery thoughts . . . and then the curtain of prayer and silence falls over him, and the convent walls close black around."<sup>1</sup> Yet he was very happy. We see it in the pleasant anecdotes of his tender love for animals, of his innocent delight in the beauties of nature. "Little brother leveret, come to me ; why hast thou let thyself be taken ?" he said, as the little trembling creature took refuge in the folds of his gown, "as if it had some hidden sense of the pitifulness of his heart." He gently trains a little lamb to love him, and gives it to the poor Sisters of Clare. He sets free a fish which had been taken, quietly putting it back into the water, and calling it brother. "My sisters," he says to the twittering flitting

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Oliphant, p. 88. Most of these stories are taken from the *Fioretti*.

swallows, who are disturbing his sermon at Alvia, "since you have had your say, it is now time that I should speak; listen now in your turn to the Word of God." "We are not worthy of such a treasure," he said, again and again, as he sat by a clear fountain with the scraps of food spread out on a natural table of rock; and when his matter-of-fact companion grumbled, "How can any one talk of a great treasure when poverty is so hard upon us?" "This table," he replied, "is to me rich and precious, where everything is provided for us by the hand of God." Yes, he was very happy; and the legends of the harp which played for him unbidden music, and the water which became for him like heavenly wine, are but symbols of this inward joy.<sup>1</sup> It glows in every line of those poems of his which were the very dawn of Italian poetry.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The same stories are found in the lives of St. Dunstan and St. Elizabeth of Hungary. On this happiness in the cloister, see Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, i. 65.

<sup>2</sup> I quote Mrs. Oliphant's version of this song. "*In foco l'amor mi mise.*" It is first attributed to St. Francis by St. Bernardino of Siena, *Opp. iv. 4.*

“Love sets my heart on fire ;  
Love sets my heart on fire.  
When thus with Christ I fought,  
Peace made we after ire ;  
For first from Him was brought  
Dear Love’s veracious fire ;  
And love of Christ has brought  
Such strength I cannot tire ;  
He dwells in soul and thought ;  
Love sets my heart on fire.”

Or take, again, in proof of his joyous tenderness, the famous Canticle of the Sun, or of the Creatures :—

“Praised be God my Lord  
With all Thy creatures ;  
Specially by my lord, our brother, the Sun :  
Fair is he, and shining with a very great splendour.  
O Lord, he signifies to us Thee ;”<sup>1</sup>

and so on through others of God’s works—  
‘Praised be our Lord by our sister the Moon,  
and the Stars; and by our brother the Wind;  
and by our sister the Water, for she is very

<sup>1</sup> The text of this famous song and translations of it may be found in Mrs. Oliphant, p. 235. Ozanam, *Les Poëtes Franciscains*, p. 71; Mr. Matthew Arnold, *Essays on Criticism*, p. 200; and Milman, *Latin Christianity*.

serviceable, and humble, and precious, and pure; by our brother the Fire, jocund, and beautiful, and most robust and strong; and by our mother the Earth, and by our sister'—what think you? —‘by our sister the Death of the body.’ So wrote this humble and holy man of heart, who had a vision of all things in God; and then he added a verse to reconcile the struggling factions of Assissi, and by it *did* bring about their mutual reconciliation, even with tears. |“Praised be our Lord by those who pardon one another for love of Thee, and bear weaknesses and troubles; blessed be those who shall endure in peace, for by the Most Highest they shall be crowned.”| No wonder that he who thus loved God’s creatures loved also his brother man. |“If a brother has sinned,” he wrote to one of his order, “however great his fault may be; if he has once been brought before you, let him not depart till he has felt your mercy.” And again: |“By one mark only can I know whether thou art a servant of God, namely, if thou compassionately

bringest back wandering brethren to God, and never ceasest to love those who grievously err."/

Such songs, my brethren, and such rules are the echoes of a heart that has learnt the Apostle's precept: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice." "Because," says Bonaventura, "they possessed nothing earthly, loved nothing earthly, and feared to lose nothing earthly; they were secure in all places; troubled by no fears, distracted by no cares; they lived without trouble of mind, waiting without anxiety for the coming day, or the night's lodging."

6. My brethren, if this exquisite, humble life, with its magic charm, have not taught you its own lessons, without further words of mine, my purpose has failed. Again, I say, I do not dream of suggesting to any one that he should imitate the external form of these lives of which we have been speaking. The worst sinner could do that, and it would be absolutely worthless. Even St. Francis saw that in his austerities he had gone too far. "I have sinned," he said,

"against my brother the ass," meaning thereby his mortal body. He even doubted in his tender conscience whether, in weakening his own natural powers by extreme asceticism, he had not sinned, almost unpardonably, against God. His Order of Mendicant Friars rapidly degenerated, involving as it did an ideal which could not be permanently maintained. But it is no small element in our admiration of the Umbrian saint that he founded the Order of the Tertiaries expressly for those who could only live in the world. And, however extreme his needless austerities, let us not dream of judging him; let us speak of him more lovingly than the historian who calls him "a mild enthusiast, not perfectly sane." For—

"When God shall judge the world, I take it  
    He will not mete this man by rule or line,  
Who felt no common thirst, nor feared to slake it  
    From that which flowed within him—the Divine.  
Or think you God loves our tame level acres  
    More than the proud head of some heaven-kissed hill?  
Man's straight-dug ditch more than His own free river,  
    That wanders, God regarding, where it will?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Poems*, by J. Rhoades.

And one thing assuredly we all can learn from St. Francis of Assissi and his truest followers. It is to live lives more simple, less luxurious, more contented with a little, less absorbed in earthly interests. In an age when simplicity—simplicity in dress, in surroundings, in eating and drinking—is eminently necessary for all, and above all for the young ; in an age when there is far too much of domestic and of family egotism ; in an age when even good men on every side fall off, we know not how,

“To selfishness, disguised in gentle names  
Of peace, and quiet, and domestic love ;”

in an age when too many sell themselves for handfuls of silver and for pieces of bread, we can learn from him, and from the happiness and influence which God granted him, the spirit of that lesson which he had learnt from the example of Christ—the lesson, namely, to increase our possessions by limiting our desires ; to sit more loose to worldly luxuries and worldly ambitions ; to scorn the too-paltry

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English ideal of mere vulgar comfort ; to brave abuse, and loss, and hatred, for the cause of what we hold to be the truth ; to learn that the *world* will sink into nothing for him to whom God is all.

“What is man,  
If the chief use and market of his time  
Is but to sleep and feed? A beast—no more.”

It is not gold or silver ; it is not land or houses ; it is not a flourishing business or hoarded funds that constitute true riches. These things are haunted by meagre desires and distracting cares. The true riches are health, and a pure heart, and love of Christ, and love to man, and perfect trust in the sustaining providence of God, and a cheerful spirit, and a noble charity. “Unto the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write ; Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, I counsel thee to buy gold of me, that

thou mayest be rich." But "to the angel of the Church in Smyrna write; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty; but thou art rich." And to all men alike, and above all to men wearying themselves in the very fire for the unsatisfying and uncertain goods of earth, "The blessing of the Lord, that maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it."



**SERMON V.**  
**THE MISSIONARIES.**



## THE MISSIONARIES.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him ; for the hour of His judgment is come : and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”—  
REV. xiv. 6, 7.

“ Yes, or if loose and free, as some are telling,  
(Little I know it and I little care),  
This my poor lodge, my transitory dwelling,  
Swings in the bright deep of the endless air,—

“ Round it and round His prophets shall proclaim Him,  
Springing thenceforth and hurrying therethro’,  
Each to the next the generations name Him,  
Honour unendingly and know anew.”

MYERS, *St. Paul.*



## SERMON V.

### *THE MISSIONARIES.<sup>1</sup>*

IS. LIL. 7.

*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.”*

WE have been throwing a rapid glance, my brethren, at some of the ideals of holiness which prevailed among the Saintly Workers of the past, and we have been doing so with the humble and simple desire to learn lessons for the present. You will have seen from the very first that I have had in view no shadow of any controversial thought; that I have aimed at nothing which could, in the most distant degree, awaken a single legitimate suspicion. Some have fancied that these lectures were meant to

<sup>1</sup> Preached in St. Andrew's, Holborn, April 11, 1878.

evoke some latent sympathy with erring beliefs, some concealed antagonism to Protestant principles. I can only look with sorrow upon such suspicions ; I can only, with all earnestness, disclaim such motives. You, my brethren, will long ago have recognised how thoroughly we have tried to keep in view the warning that, in “unwinding the cerements of antiquity, we should not be contaminated with their dust.” To revive the obsolete, to resuscitate the decayed, to imitate the external, to reintroduce the evils and errors of the past because we may profit by the contemplation of its heroism and its self-denials, has (as you will have recognised) never remotely entered into our intentions. We have but striven to be edified as faithful Christians ; we have but tried to realise “the communion of saints ;” we have but raised our eyes to the beacon-lights upon the hills which show how high our brethren in God’s family have climbed ; we have but tried to learn from them how they were enabled, by Christ’s spirit, to follow His steps and bear His cross. Oh, that

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all bitterness and all disunions among us were over! Oh for more of the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace! Oh that we could all learn more of the tone of St. Columban, when the French bishops wanted to enforce his obedience to their time of observing Easter. "Let France," he said—and may not we say, "Let the Church of England?"—"receive into her bosom all who, if they deserve it, will meet in one heaven. For we have one kingdom promised us—we have one hope of our calling in Christ, with whom we shall reign together if we suffer with Him here on earth. Choose ye which rule ye will respecting Easter," continued the saint; "but let us not quarrel with one another, lest our enemies rejoice. In communion with Christ let us learn to love one another, and pray for one another, that with Him we may together reign for evermore."<sup>1</sup>

2. To-day, and for the last time, we glance,

<sup>1</sup> Maclear, *Apostles of Mediæval Europe*, p. 64. I have also referred to the charming sketch of St. Columban in Ozanam's *Études Germaniques*, ii., 103-114.

my brethren, at yet another class of saintly workers. The age of frequent Martyrdom is past; the age of the Hermits is past; the age of Monasticism is past; the needed protest of the Dominicans and Franciscans very rapidly degenerated from its original sincerity, and expended its original force.<sup>1</sup> But the day for missions is not past, nor ever will be till the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ. And sure I am that all which was good and holy in bygone ideals of self-devotion may be perpetuated in the best forms of goodness which are possible to-day. It needed not the stake or the Tullianum to make the Martyr, but the intense conviction that he who lost his life for Christ's sake should find it. It was not the cavern and the desert which constituted the Hermit's virtue, but the spirit of "interior solitude,"<sup>2</sup> and the belief that the life was more

<sup>1</sup> We see this even in the warnings of Dante, though he is full of admiration for the ideal of both.

<sup>2</sup> "Secum habitavit," says St. Gregory of St. Benedict.

than meat, and the body than raiment. It was not from the tonsure and the scapulare that the Monk derived his usefulness, but from that determinate self-conquest which sprang from his sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There was no merit in the sandals and girdle of the Franciscan, but in his utter superiority to the allurements of the world. And all these lessons have come down as a heritage to age after age of mission workers. Speaking of the era of classic glory, the poet asks :—

“ Ancient of Days ! august Athena ! Where,  
Where are thy men of might ? thy grand in soul ?  
Gone—glimmering through the dream of things that were :  
First in the race that led to Glory’s goal,  
They won, and passed away. Is this the whole ?  
A schoolboy’s tale, the wonder of an hour !  
The warrior’s weapon and the sophist’s stole  
Are sought in vain, and o’er each mouldering tower  
Dim with the mist of years grey flits the shade of power ! ”

But however much the dreams of human pride and the splendour of human intellect may pass away, the lives and labours of good men in no wise pass away with their external

surroundings. Nay, far rather they are the seed sown in weeping, of which others, it may be long centuries afterwards, gather in the sheaves with joy. What could seem more alien from the spirit of a Romish monk than that of a Baptist missionary? Yet it was David Livingstone—who most assuredly had no mediæval sentiments or Romish proclivities—who pointed to the ancient monks as teaching lessons to the modern missionaries. “They did not,” he said, “disdain to hold the plough. They introduced fruit-trees, flowers, vegetables, in addition to teaching and emancipating the serfs. Their monasteries were mission-stations, which resembled ours in being dispensaries for the sick, almshouses for the poor, and nurseries of learning. Can we learn nothing from them in their prosperity as the schools of Europe, and see naught in history but the pollution and laziness of their decay?”

3. But though the other types of self-dedication have become partly or wholly extinct,—though each age has altered the device upon

the current gold of nobleness and self-devotion,—the missionaries (as Christ commanded them) have continued unbroken their Christ-like toil. Even the old dispensation lacked not its missionaries, from Noah, down to Jonah and to Daniel. But since Christ gave His last command to His assembled disciples, there have ever been some who felt that it was their more special call to obey it. St. Paul was not one of those who heard it, but was, as it were, “the abortive-born”<sup>1</sup> in the apostolic family, yet what a type and model of all missionaries was he! That life of his as it stands revealed to us in his own Epistles, how sad it was, and how fruitful! From that day on which, blind and trembling, and with the scars of God’s own thunder on his soul, he had staggered into the streets of Damascus, what a tragedy had encompassed him of ever-deepening gloom! That first peril, when he had been let down in a basket through a window—the flights from assassination—the hot disputes at Antioch—the

<sup>1</sup> ὡσπερετ τῷ ἐκτρόματι.—1 Cor. xv. 8.

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expulsion from Iconium—the stoning at Lystra—the quarrel with his own heart's brother—the acute spasms of that impalement by the stake in the flesh at Galatia—the agony in Macedonia of outward fightings and inward fears—the five Jewish scourgings—the three Roman flagellations—the polished scorn of Athens—the factious violence of Corinth—the streaming tears of the parting at Miletus—the gnashing fury of Jewish mobs—the illegal insolence of provincial tribunals ;—these were but a fragment, and a small fragment, of his trials and miseries. Even the brute forces of nature seemed to be against him—he had to struggle in her rushing watercourses, to faint in her sultry deserts, to toss for long days and nights in leaky vessels on her tempestuous seas. This was the perilous, persecuted life on which he had to look back as he sat chained to the rude legionary in that dreary Roman prison. He seemed to have found no result from all his labours, no reward for all his immense self-sacrifice. He seemed to have been abandoned and forgotten by the

very churches which he had loved. Nor did any sunbeam gild even the last unrecorded scene. See the bent, grey weak old man, led by the soldier along the Appian Road; see the sword flash and the head fall; and which, think you, of that small handful of weeping Christian brethren could have dreamed in his wildest dream, that, to that poor martyr's glorious memory, shrines more magnificent than that of the Capitolian Jupiter should tower over cities more glorious than Imperial Rome, long centuries after the "insulting vanity" of triumph had ceased, and "silent vestal" and "chiefest pontifex" had become forgotten names? Nor did the saint, the martyr himself, dream of it. His thoughts were not of earthly crowns. He asked the service, not the payment; the battle, not the victory. Type of all true missionary lives, his was "the faith triumphant in failure, which is better than self-congratulation on any visible results."

4 And for three centuries after him the whole Church led more or less of a mission

life. But missions in a directer sense—the setting forth of Christian men to preach the Gospel in heathen lands—became specially memorable in the fourth and following centuries. From point to point, like the flashing of a glad signal from hill to hill, the heralds of the Gospel sped on its light. In the fourth century Ulphilas had been the apostle of the Goths. In the fifth St. Patrick converted Ireland. In the sixth St. Columba began that holy work which makes “the heart glow amid the ruins of Iona,” and St. Columbanus carried to the shores of the Swiss Lakes the lessons of truth and the examples of holy living. In the seventh century, struck by the beauty of the fair-haired Saxon slaves in the market-place of Rome—*Non Angli, sed Angeli, si essent Christi*—Gregory despatched St. Augustine to become the first Archbishop of Canterbury. When England had been converted she sent forth St. Willibrod in the eighth century to the shores of Northern Germany, and St. Boniface to traverse undaunted

the Thuringian wilds; and when the Scandinavian vikings were becoming the scourge of every nation, and the terror of every sea, in the ninth century, an Anskar, and, in the eleventh, an Olaf, won *them* also to the faith of Christ, and the main work of the missionary apostolate in Europe was achieved. He who sits on the hill at Canterbury may recall (as has been pointed out) how, from the mission-work of the little band of monks, headed by Augustine, which advanced with beating hearts to preach under the oak to the Pagan Ethelbert, there sprang that first English Christian city of Canterbury, and that first English Christian kingdom of Kent, which has expanded into the Christian empire of Great Britain, and which involved in its vast issues the conversion not only of Germany, but also of North America, of Australasia, of the far Pacific Islands,<sup>1</sup>—and who can tell of what future empires and kingdoms, in circle after circle of ever-broadening light,

<sup>1</sup> See Dean Stanley, *Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 39.

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till the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea ?

5. At two of these earlier British missionaries whom I have named (St. Columban and St. Boniface) let me for a moment glance.

St. Columban was an Irish monk, on whom, at the age of thirty, came the strong mission fervour to preach to the pagan tribes of Europe. With twelve companions he sailed to France, and passed through the country, preaching on his way, till he reached and settled among the wild hills and pine-groves of the Vosges. There his monks lived, clearing the woods and tilling the fields in prayer, and labour, and obedience. "Whosoever overcomes himself," said Columban, "treads the world under foot. If we have conquered ourselves, we have conquered all things. Let us die unto ourselves. Let us live in Christ, that Christ may live in us." Of course he met with persecution; all good men do. He was persecuted by bishops whose laxity his life rebuked. He was persecuted by kings and queens whose vices he openly denounced.

In spite of this he carried on for many years that *Laus perennis*, that service of song and prayer, unbroken through every hour of the day and night, which struck the imagination of the careless, and was accepted as a source of spiritual blessing by a troubled and tumultuous world. He was at last driven from the country, and settled on the Lake of Zürich ; but his life-long witness of prayer, and labour, and meditation, and the bold antagonism to sin, had not been in vain. "He had stood among wild warriors a witness to an unseen power greater than that of earth ; an apostle of spiritual service harder than their own, speaking with a stern majesty of acts which appealed to their senses, and awakening hopes not quenched by the battle or the feast."<sup>1</sup> His work was continued by his friend and follower Gallus, who reclaimed the people from barbarism and taught them both agriculture and religion, and over whose humble cell rose that magni-

<sup>1</sup> Wescott. A sketch of St. Columban may be found in Ozanam, *Études Germaniques*, ii., 103-114.

ficient monastery of St. Gall which centuries afterwards was one of the most celebrated schools of Christendom, and one of the principal centres of intellect and light in the Germanic world.<sup>1</sup>

6. Still wider and grander was the work of St. Boniface. When he was a lad in Devonshire, his heart first burned with the desire to serve God. Fearlessly piercing the dark forests of Germany, he won over the heathen in thousands by his self-denial, his toils, his courage. Near Geismar, in Upper Hesse, there stood a vast and venerable oak sacred for ages to Thor, the God of Thunder. It has been an instinct of idolatry in all ages to pay idolatrous reverence to great and aged trees, and St. Boniface tried in vain to win the Teutons from their superstitious adoration to the Thunderer's Oak. At last, as a desperate remedy, he seized an axe, and, with his clergy, advanced, amid the breathless alarm and wonder of the pagans to hew down the object of their immemorial

<sup>1</sup> Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, ii. 461.

worship. Stroke after stroke rang on the gnarled trunk, while the priests of Thor implored their deity to avenge himself, and the pagans thought at each moment that the flash of Heaven would fall.<sup>1</sup> At last, with a mighty crash, the huge oak fell, and splintered into fragments. Out of its fragments Boniface built the chapel to St. Peter. Day by day his converts multiplied, and the sphere of his influence widened. Recognising his glorious work, the Pope made him Archbishop of Mainz. But even at seventy-five the fire of zeal was not quenched in the old man's heart. He resigned his archbishopric, and went to preach to the heathen Frisians, ordering a shroud to be put up with his books. A hostile band of pagans met him on a river bank, and, forbidding all resistance, he obtained the crown of martyrdom for which he longed. The manuscript of the Gospel, which he carried at the moment of

<sup>1</sup> Maclear, p. 115. For a life of St. Columban, see Montalembert, *Monks of the West*, bk. vii. Ozanam, *Études Germaniques*, ii. 170-220.

death, was stained with his blood, and it is still shown as a sacred relic among the treasures of the great monastery of St. Fulda.

7. If these two may stand as specimens of those earlier missionaries who converted Europe, Raymond Lulli may show what a missionary of the thirteenth century could sacrifice and dare. A man of immense learning and splendid ability, his youth had been devoted to gaiety and sin, when he was won to holier aims by a sermon of a Franciscan friar, in which he told the story of St. Francis of Assissi, who had then been dead some forty years. It was the age of the Crusades, but Raymond Lulli thought, as Francis had thought, that it would be better to convert the Saracens than to slay them. With incredible toil, with unflagging zeal, in a life of incessant hardships and perils, this great man, the fame of whose genius was on every tongue, whose logic was long in use in the schools of Europe, devoted himself to his great purpose with scarce one voice to encourage, or one friend to share his

labours. The last year of his life was spent at Bugia in concealment, but secretly preaching to Jews and Mohammedans. One day, June 30, 1315, he ventured forth from the hiding-place, and, openly preaching to the people, was assailed by the fury of the Moslem population, and stoned to death.<sup>1</sup>

8. But perhaps no missionary who ever lived was greater than Francis Xavier, in the sixteenth century. A son of the lords of Xavier, he entered the University of Paris, and there rose into brilliant reputation. Among the crowd of the wealthy and the noble who thronged his lectures stood day by day the stern figure of the quondam Spanish knight, Ignatius Loyola, and his sordid dress and stern bearing were often the butt of Xavier's ridicule. Yet Ignatius did not leave him. Constantly with him, in business, in pleasure, in discussion, in amusement, in exercise, in society, he invariably ended every meeting with the one awful question: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the

<sup>1</sup> See an account of his genius in *Vie des Savans Illustres*.

whole world and lose his own soul?" When the popularity of Xavier failed, Ignatius revived it, but still with the same question, "What shall it profit?" When his resources were wasted by extravagance, Ignatius resupplied his wants, but still with the same question, "What shall it profit?" In success, in happiness, in pleasure, always the same question, "What shall it profit?" At last that question was burnt in upon the young man's soul, and joining the Order of Jesus, which Ignatius had founded, he surpassed all the rest in his austerities and penances. At this time John III. of Portugal desired to plant Christianity in India, and Xavier embraced with delight the awful and perilous mission. Imbued with the stern error that the crushing of every natural affection was a duty which Christianity required, he passed without a farewell the castle in which his mother and sister lived, and embarked penniless and possessionless on a vessel bound for Goa. During the long months of the voyage he lived entirely on the

scraps given him by the soldiers and sailors ; but so entirely did he win the love of all on board by tending the sick and consoling the sorrowful, and trying to reclaim the sinful, that, though he landed in all the emaciation of disease and weakness, his shipmates regarded him as the happiest man of the crowded and suffering crew. How he was shocked by the depravities of Goa—how he taught the children there—how he went to work among the poor degraded pearl-fishers of the Straits of Manaar—how he laboured at Cape Comorin—how he converted thousands, and baptised tens of thousands—how he crossed to Travancore and inspired the Rajah to repel a hostile invasion—how he reformed the guilty city of Malacca—how, with calm intrepidity, he carried on unmoved the offices of religion while an earthquake was rocking the very ground under his feet—how, amid incredible dangers and violent opposition, he made his way to Japan—how he met and foiled the bonzes—how returning to Goa he tended the people during a raging

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pestilence—all his learning, all the sagacity, all the patience, all the boundless self-denial, all the immense empire and authority over the minds of men which that self-conquest gained for him, you may read in the records of his life. But in his, as in so many previous cases, I should like you to observe the abounding joy and happiness which he experienced in the midst of squalor, disease, starvation, hatred, suffering. On one occasion he “baptised till his hand dropped with weariness, and his voice became inaudible; experiencing, as he says, in his whole soul a joy which it would be vain to attempt to express either in writing or by speech.” “So intense,” he wrote on another occasion, “and abundant are the delights which God is accustomed to bestow on those who labour diligently in His service in the vineyard in this barbarous land, that if there be, in this life, any true solid enjoyment, I believe it to be this, and this alone.” And how did he die? I will read you the description. He was trying to make his way to China to plant the Gospel

there, when the angel of death met him on his wild and perilous journey. "At his own request he was removed to the shore that he might meet his end with greater composure. Stretched on the naked beach, with the cold blasts of a Chinese winter aggravating his pains, he contended alone with the agonies of the fever which wasted his vital powers. It was an agony and a solitude for which the happiest of the sons of men might well have exchanged the dearest society and the purest joys of life. It was an agony in which his uplifted crucifix reminded him of a far more awful woe endured for his deliverance. It was a solitude thronged by blessed ministers of invisible consolation." Tears burst from his fading eyes, tears of an emotion too big for utterance. In the cold collapse of death his features were, for a few brief moment, irradiated as with the first beams of approaching glory. He raised himself on his crucifix, and exclaiming 'In te, Domine, speravi—non confundar in æternum !' he bowed his head and died."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Stephen, *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, ii. 138.

9. And, my brethren, what shall I more say? The time would fail me were I to attempt even the catalogue of all the true saints and dauntless heroes of the mission cause from age to age. But may I, without wearying you, dwell for one moment on some of the beloved names of this last century? Let me, at least, make passing mention of the *Moravian Missionaries* in Greenland,

“Fired with a zeal peculiar to defy  
The rage and rigour of a polar sky,  
And plant successfully sweet Sharon’s Rose  
On icy plains and in eternal snows;”<sup>1</sup>

of *John Eliot*, the Apostle of the Red Indians, with his life of toil and gentleness, and his motto, that prayer and painstaking would accomplish everything; of *David Brainerd*, living alone among the savages in the forests, though far advanced in consumption, and saying, “My heaven is to please God and glorify Him”; of the just, the venerable, the generous, the simple-hearted *Schwartz*; of *Henry Martyn*, the Cam-

<sup>1</sup> Cowper.

bridge senior wrangler, as we see his pure pale face rising above his foul congregation at Cawnpore, and pity him during those long hours of lingering fever, when he had to thrust his head for rest among the damp boxes of his luggage, till he sank into his lonely grave in the plague-stricken city of Tocat ; of poor *Adoniram Judson*, bright and cheerful even amid the horrors of a Burmese prison ; of *Bishop Reginald Heber*, who, though he had worked but two years in India before he was found dead in his bath, yet during those two years had breathed into his tender lyrics that fire and dew of poetry which has done so much to sweeten Indian life ;<sup>1</sup> of *Bishop Cotton*, and the six years of wise and faithful energy before that one false step on the plank which flung him into the turbid river, never to be seen on earth again ; of *Samuel Marsden*, the friend of the Maories, who civilised as well as taught them, and whom they loved and honoured as a father,—

<sup>1</sup> Sketches of the missionaries mentioned in this paragraph will be found in Miss Yonge's *Pioneers and Founders*.

“ With furrowed brow and cheek serenely fair,  
The calm winds wandering o'er his silver hair ;  
His arm uplifted, and his moistened eye  
Fixed in deep rapture on the golden sky.  
Upon the shore, through many a billow driven,  
He kneels at last the messenger of Heaven.  
Yes ! he hath triumphed ! while his lips relate  
The sacred story of his Saviour's fate,  
In speechless awe the wonder-stricken throng  
Check their rude feasting and their barbarous song, . . .  
And kneel in gladness on their native plain,  
As happier votaries at a holier fane ! ”<sup>1</sup>

10. My brethren, what lives are these ! how superior to ours, which are so murmuring, so somnolent, so self-indulgent ! Are not our lives, compared to the lives of such as these, as the brambles to the oaks at whose feet they grow ? Ay, but even in these days, even in our own lifetime, there have been some, who, “ aiming at something more high and heroical in religion than this age affecteth,” have even glorified the missionary's labours with the martyr's crown. It was thus that, in 1840, *John Williams* was murdered among the heathens of Erromango ; it was thus that, in 1845, the brave sailor, *Allen*

<sup>1</sup> PRAED, *Australasia*.

*Gardiner*, was starved to death in the long Antarctic winter at Picton Island, while, on the cavern near which his skeleton was found, he had painted up the words, "My soul, wait thou still upon God, for my hope is in Him." It was thus that, in 1862, *Bishop Charles Mackenzie*, after a life that looked all failure, died of fatigue and fever amid the malarious swamps of the Zambesi. "As for happiness," he said to his sister not long before his death, "I have given up looking for that altogether. Now till death my post is one of unrest and care. To be the sharer of every one's sorrow, the comforter of every one's grief, the strengthener of every one's weakness; to do this, as much as in me lies, is my aim and object." "He said this with a smile," she adds, "and, oh! the peace in his face; it seemed as if nothing could shake it!"

11. And though that is but sixteen years ago, even since then two more heroic souls have joined that glorious army of martyrs—*David Livingstone* and *Coleridge Patteson*. Five years ago, on May 1, 1873, *David Livingstone*, the

great pioneer, the great foe of the slave-trade, breathed his last in the sultry wastes of Central Africa, in his hut at Ulala, with no white man near,—no love of wife or sister to cool his fevered forehead ; no hand of son or brother to close his glazing eyes. And faithful to the very last to that which had been the great work of his life, he wrote, as the last words of his journal, almost with his dying hand, “ All I can add in my solitude is, may Heaven’s rich blessing come down on every one . . . who will help to heal this open sore of the world.”<sup>1</sup> And seven years ago Coleridge Patteson, noble Cole-ridge Patteson, the pure-hearted, gallant, modest Eton boy, who gave up every prospect in England to labour amid the Pacific savages ;—who had been obliged to be ready many a time to plunge in the waters that break among those coral reefs, “ amid sharks, and devilfish, and stinging jellies,” to escape the flight of poisoned arrows, of which the slightest graze meant horrid death—

<sup>1</sup> These lines are recorded on his gravestone in the nave of Westminster Abbey.

he too in that high service died by the clubs of savages whom he had often risked his life to save; died, as since then the brave and gentle Commodore Goodenough died, at the hands of savages exasperated by the accursed man-stealing wickedness of white men who desecrate the English name; and they laid the young English martyr Bishop in an open boat to float away over the bright blue waters, with his hands, crossed as if in prayer, and a palm-branch on his breast.

12. There are many, many lessons, my brethren, on which I have not even touched, which yet spring immediately from the contemplation of these noble and saintly lives during nineteen centuries at which, by the good hand of God upon us, we have, on these five Thursdays together glanced;—lessons of self-denial, lessons of patience, lessons of self-conquest, lessons of mastery over the world in the might of unarmed holiness. But I must say one word of one truth deeply needed now—the lesson of the essential unity of the faith in men as unlike each other

as the crusading warrior king and the consumptive puritan clergyman; as unlike as Benedict the monk and Brainerd the Calvinist; as unlike as the highborn Jesuit, St. Francis Xavier, and the unsuccessful cobbler, William Carey; as unlike as the poetic Heber in his lawn sleeves, and the squalid St. Antony in his sheepskin cloak. Yet all these, so utterly unlike each other in particular beliefs, in outward practices—all these, though some of them, had they lived at the same period, would have consigned one another to the thumbscrew and the stake, were yet all like each other, for they were all like their common Lord. Each of them was a bright planet in the firmament of human goodness, sparkling with a different lustre, but each irradiated by one common sun. Adoniram Judson, the American missionary, tells us how God had never refused him one fervent prayer, in almost the same words as St. Dominic the mediæval Spaniard; and Henry Martyn writes of happiness, in the midst of disease and failure, in the same tone as Francis Xavier and Henri

Lacordaire. Yes, all these were one—all one in Christ ; the hermit, the monk, the papist, the fanatic, the mendicant, the Jesuit, the inquisitor, had not only one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father of them all, who was above all, and through all, and in them all, but even essentially *one* faith with the English athlete, and the stern Calvinist, and the American puritan, and the passionate reformer. Faith—faith in the unseen—faith in God, faith in Christ, and that faith leading to infinite self-denial, and working by incessant love, that was the secret of their common holiness, that is the lesson of their common example. Alas for the mutual hatreds, and miserable feuds, in the little lives of men ! St. Carlo Borromeo, sweeping to the cathedral at Milan in grand procession, in the splendid robe of a cardinal, but by the trickling drops of blood on the marble pavement revealing, against his will, that his feet were bare over the sharp flints beneath his scarlet robe, would have consigned an Eliot or Carey to the dungeon or the stake. Henry Martyn or John Williams would

have regarded as votaries of the Beast and the False Prophet, with more of religious aversion than of Miltonic scorn, those "Eremites and Friars, white, black, and grey, with all their trumpery," whom our great poet consigns, with embryos and idiots, to the paradise of fools.

But the thoughts of God are higher than men, and the ways of God are juster. For the saints who hate each other, who persecute each other, who denounce each other as heretics, who attribute to each other the worst motives, who call down on each other the indignation of God and man, Heaven opens its pitying harmonious doors; and these holders of mutually destructive opinions shall, with a smile at the old leaven of their anathematising ignorance, and a sigh, if there be sighs in heaven, for the aching hearts they caused each other on earth—shall in the light of their Father's countenance "clasp inseparable hands in joy and bliss in over measure, for ever." Yes, Heaven, we hope, will have its healing peace for the bitter dissensions even of earth's saints.

---

“O shame to men ! devil with devil damn'd  
Firm concord holds ; men only disagree  
Of creatures rational, though under hope  
Of heavenly grace ; and, God proclaiming peace,  
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife,  
As if (which might induce us to accord)  
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,  
That, day and night, for his destruction wait !”

But if peace cannot be between the children of God on earth ; if men, in their assumed infallibility, will not tolerate one another's inevitably divergent opinions ; let *us*, at least, try to walk by faith. For all these died in the faith. It was by faith that *Ignatius* faced the lions ; by faith that *Polycarp* stood unflinching in the flame ; by faith *Antony* lived his twenty years in the mountain cell ; by faith *Benedict* rolled his naked body among the thorns to subdue the lusts of the flesh ; by faith *Fra Angelico* despised the honours of the world ; by faith *Francis* reproduced on the Umbrian hills the life of Christ ; by faith *St. Columban* faced the fierce tyranny of Burgundian kings ; by faith *St. Boniface* hewed down the idol oak ; by faith

*Eliot, and Judson, and Marsden, and Heber, and Mackenzie, and Coleridge Patteson, and Allen Gardiner, and David Livingstone* civilised the Indians, converted the heathen, put down the slave-trade, showed us how to do, and dare, and die in their Master's cause ; and even so by faith *we* too, God helping *us*, may learn from the *Martyrs* that better is fearful death than shamed life ; from the *Hermits* that the life is more than meat ; from the *Monks* the sacredness of poverty, chastity, and obedience ; from the *Early Franciscans* contempt of gold ; from the *Missionaries* devotion to God's other sheep which are not of this flock. All these died in the faith, having both received the promises, in part, on earth, and seen them afar off in heaven. Let us with them follow Christ our common Lord. As one of themselves, even, a poet of their own has written—

“They faced the tyrant's brandished steel,  
The lion's gory mane,  
They bowed their necks, the death to feel ;  
Who follows in their train ?

“A noble Army, men and boys,  
The matron and the maid,  
Around the Saviour’s throne rejoice,  
In robes of light arrayed.

“They climbed the steep ascent of heaven.  
Mid peril, toil, and pain,  
Oh God, to us may grace be given,  
To follow in their train.”



## A P P E N D I X.



## APPENDIX.

I PRINT the following simple rules, drawn up to help the younger members of my congregation in the effort to live a Christian life, because I have been asked for them by several clergymen who thought that they might be useful in other parishes.

### RULES OF THE ST. MARGARET'S SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS.

---

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after."—PHIL. III, 12.

---

#### RULES.

*(To be kept with sincere intention, God helping.)*

- 1.—Never neglect your Prayers, morning or evening.
- 2.—Examine yourself carefully as to your thoughts and manner of life, at all events once in the week.
- 3.—Read every day, and think over, at least a few verses of the Bible: before you begin, ask GOD to bless what you are about to read.

4.—Come to Church every Sunday, unless prevented by some good reason, and at other times as you have opportunity. Take care not to be late: kneel when you ought, and join heartily in the Service.

5.—Come to Holy Communion, bearing in mind your Lord's command, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

6.—Always prepare for Holy Communion by self-examination, resolution, and prayer.

7.—Try to think and speak kindly of every one; "Honour all men."

8.—Watch and pray against all temptations to definite evil. Keep from all places and company in which you are likely to be tempted.

9.—Try to do some special work for GOD in His Church.

---

*was admitted a Member of this Society*

*on* \_\_\_\_\_ 18

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